DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 507 FL 023 856

AUTHOR Parkinson, Brian, Ed.; Mitchell, Keith
TITLE Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics, 1996.
INSTITUTION Edinburgh Univ. (Scotland). Dept. of Linguistics.
REPORT NO ISSN-0959-2253
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 141p.; For individual articles, see FL 023 857-865. For the 1995 volume, see ED 383 204.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics; n7 1996

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Applied Linguistics; Cultural Awareness; Discussion (Teaching Technique); English for Academic Purposes; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Journalism; Learning Strategies; Modern Languages; Poetry; *Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Semantics; Teacher Education; Word Recognition
IDENTIFIERS Deixis; *University of Edinburgh (Scotland)

ABSTRACT

This monograph contains papers on research work in progress at the Department of Applied Linguistics and Institute for Applied Language Studies at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland). Topics addressed include general English teaching, English for Academic Purposes teaching, Modern Language teaching, and teacher education. Papers are: "Cultural Semantics in a Second-Language Text" (Carol Chan); "The Concealing and Revealing of Meaning in the Cryptic Crossword Clue" (John Cleary); "Learners' Perceptions of Factors Affecting Their Language Learning" (Giulia Dawson, Elisabeth McCulloch and Stella Peyronel); "Japanese Learners in Speaking Classes" (Eileen Dwyer and Anne Heller-Murphy); "Manipulating Reality Through Metaphorizing Processes in Wartime Reporting" (Noriko Iwamoto); "Basing Discussion Classes on Learners' Questions: An Experiment in (Non-)Course Design" (Tony Lynch); "Participant Action Plans and the Evaluation of Teachers' Courses" (Ian McGrath); "Deixis and the Dynamics of the Relationship Between Text and Reader in the Poetry of Eugenio Montale" (Rossella Riccobono); and "Constructivism, Optimality, and Language Acquisition. The Shapes We Make in Each Other's Heads" (Chris Whincop). (Contains chapter references.) (NAV)

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FL023856

Number 7
1996

EDINBURGH WORKING PAPERS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Number 7

1996

(ISSN 0959-2253)

Published jointly by the Department of Applied Linguistics
and the Institute for Applied Language Studies
University of Edinburgh
Scotland

Editors: Brian Parkinson
Keith Mitchell

Subscription information

Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics (EWPAL) is published in the third term of the University of Edinburgh year (April-June). Details of subscription rates and journal exchange arrangements are at the end of this issue.

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Preface

EWPAL provides an annual update on some of the work being carried out in applied linguistics and language pedagogy by students and staff of the Department of Applied Linguistics and Institute for Applied Language Studies, both in the University of Edinburgh. This issue has a particularly good balance between and within these institutions: the four IALS papers relate to teaching in four of its 'sections' - General English, English for Academic Purposes, Modern Languages and Teacher Education - and the five DAL papers range over psycholinguistics, literary stylistics, discourse/pragmatics and cross-cultural studies, together with Cleary's *sui generis* topic.

As usual I would like to thank the 'readers' who have found time to comment on manuscripts submitted. These have included Keith Mitchell (the assistant editor), Cathy Benson, Martin Gill, Eric Glendinning, Kate Lawrence, Tony Lynch, Joan Maclean, Liam Rodger, Antonella Sorace and Hugh Trappes-Lomax.

Thanks also go to Lesley Quigg for turning contributors' 'final' versions into these published papers, and to Alan White and his colleagues at the University Printing Office, who have taken over the final stage of production.

Brian Parkinson

May 1996

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CULTURAL SEMANTICS IN A SECOND-LANGUAGE TEXT

Carol Y. M. Chan (DAL)

Abstract

Second-language writing in English may use the same linguistic structures as first-language texts. However, the significance of individual words often depends greatly on the underlying cultural frameworks. This paper presents the theory of prototype semantics as a useful approach to understanding the relationship between language and culture in second-language texts since it relates word-meaning to social and cultural models. An example of a second-language text is analyzed to demonstrate how prototypical meanings can be evoked and how they contribute to narrative significance. The analysis of this second-language text reveals that a prototypical meaning based on a specific cultural model can serve as the basis for culturally significant meanings in the text.

1. Introduction

The globalization of English has been accompanied by an upsurge of writing in English by non-native and second-language speakers. Examples from minority and post-colonial literature reveal the use of a non-native language in native contexts which is akin to 'redefining the semantic and semiotic potential of a language, making a language mean something which is not part of its traditional "meaning"' (Kachru 1982: 341). This is because, in seeking to portray non-English sensibilities and local realities, such texts do not simply draw unquestioningly upon the resources of one code, they must achieve control over it in the ways described by the Singaporean poet, Edwin Thumboo:

> Mastering it [the English language] involves holding down and breaching a body of habitual English associations to secure the condition of verbal freedom cardinal to energetic, resourceful writing.
>
> (1976: ix)

Thus, choosing a non-native language for self-expression involves contending with the cultural meanings already encoded in linguistic items. In addition, the lack of language structures and meaningful associations pertaining to the non-native speaker's cultural reality must also be overcome. Like Kachru, Thumboo describes the process in terms of remaking a language and 'adjusting the interior landscape of words in order to explore and mediate the permutations of another culture and environment' (ibid).

A study of such works can therefore contribute significantly to an understanding of the relationship between language and culture, not least in the development of second-language proficiency and the expression of the speaker's own native identity. With the spread of English across cultures and the resurgent interest in the role of culture in English language teaching, analysis of second-language written texts can add new insight into the ways culture influences and is expressed through language.

2. Communication and culture

2.1 Using a second language

The difficulties faced by the post-colonial writer underscore the fact that languages are social systems structured and maintained by societies, situated within particular cultural contexts. As Lyons states, self-expression through language is 'very largely controlled by socially imposed and socially recognised norms of behaviour and categorisation' (1981: 144). With the spread of English as a world language, communities which do not identify with British norms tend to subvert them in order to impose their own non-English patterns of usage, giving rise to varieties such as Indian, Australian, and Nigerian English.

This adaptation of English across cultures would not be possible without the creative quality of language. It is this quality that allows second-language speakers to generate new linguistic structures, or to adapt familiar

linguistic structures for the expression of unfamiliar concepts. In the process, they achieve a form of translation which involves encoding concepts that are not part of the meaning system of a language, and hence, the possibility of cross-cultural communication.

However, the manipulation of linguistic structures does not guarantee successful cross-cultural communication. For example, Western readers may still not recognise the cultural import of certain linguistic items in a story by a Chinese author, even though the text is in English. The cultural connotations of linguistic items often depend on prototypical usages of such terms within a particular linguistic community. These prototypical usages may be carried over into the second-language text, when the second-language writer attempts to communicate some aspects of his or her native cultural reality using equivalent terms in English. In the process, he or she reorganises or extends the meanings of linguistic items, so that they can convey more or other than their habitual, *taken-for-granted* meanings.

This paper seeks to examine one of the ways by which cultural meanings are conveyed through a second-language. It will focus on the role of prototypical cultural meanings for the interpretation of second-language writing in English. The insights afforded by studies of prototype semantics will be applied to an analysis of a narrative by Maxine Hong Kingston.

2.2 A definition of culture

Culture is often identified with the behaviour, the rituals or ceremonies, the songs, dances, narratives, and other cultural products of individual societies. In this paper, we shall adopt a cognitive view of culture, as found in Holland and Quinn's succinct definition of culture as 'shared presuppositions about the world' (1987: vii). This view defines culture as knowledge, both practical and propositional, acquired through membership of a particular community. Lyons notes that 'as far as propositional knowledge is concerned, it is the fact that something is held to be true that counts, not its actual truth or falsity' (1981:302). Thus, while cultural knowledge may consist of knowledge about the real world, it also includes assumptions, which do not correspond to reality or only in varying degrees. When we refer to cultural meaning expressed through language, we mean this body of shared knowledge, both factual and assumed.

3. Semantic prototypes

3.1 Culture in meaning construction

Recent studies of word meaning recognize the roles of culture and cognition in meaning construction. Traditionally, the study of lexical meaning or semantics attempts to determine the meaning of a lexeme in terms of sense - its relationship with other lexemes - and denotation - its relationship with the outside world. While the distinctions of sense and denotation are helpful, determining word meaning solely in these terms will be of limited value because it is based upon the assumption that the relationship between things and words is direct and uniform. Lexical non-isomorphism reflects the fact that lexemes in one language tend not to have the same denotation as those in another language. For example, in Chinese, the words 桌子 [zhuo zi][1] denote either a table or desk, and speakers would only go to the trouble of referring to the latter as 书桌 [shu zhuo] if they wanted to be specific in cases of ambiguity; an English speaker, on the other hand, would habitually use two distinct labels for these objects.

The meaning of lexemes denoting abstract concepts, such as *kinship*, *beauty*, and *anger*, depends even more greatly upon the cultural context in which they are used since our understanding of them is based upon socially transmitted knowledge. As Wierzbicka emphasizes, in her study of semantics in relation to culture and cognition:

> ... language doesn't reflect the world directly: it reflects human conceptualization, human interpretation of the world. (1992: 7)

Thus, the different cultural interpretations of a label, such as *the most beautiful woman*, depend upon how individual societies define beauty. This difference reflects the fact that, in general, lexical structures of languages are governed by 'culturally important distinctions among classes of entities' (Lyons 1981: 153).

One way of examining these cultural distinctions is by applying the theory of prototype semantics. Studies by Fillmore, Sweetser and Lakoff demonstrate the influence of prototype semantics in our use of language. Essentially, prototype semantics views word-meaning 'as determined by a central or prototypical application' (Sweetser 1987: 43).[2] By relating real-world cases to a best instance of word-usage and by highlighting the underlying role of cultural models in theories of word definition, prototype semantics recognises the crucial fact that words do not exist in a vacuum, but are grounded in the speaker's world.

3.2 Fillmore (1975)

In his analysis of the English noun *bachelor*, Fillmore (1975) argues that the traditional definition of *bachelor* as an unmarried adult man is inadequate because it cannot explain why some unmarried men, such as the pope, Tarzan, or a male partner in a long-term relationship, are not described as bachelors. As an alternative, he proposes that when speakers use the word *bachelor*, they think in terms of a context with certain expectations about marriage and the marriageable age. Thus, the word *bachelor* 'frames' (Fillmore's term) a simplified world of prototypical events: men marry at a certain age and marriages last for life. In such a world, a bachelor is a man who stays unmarried beyond the usual marriageable age, and becomes eminently marriageable. As popes, Tarzans and males in long-term unmarried couplings do not belong in such simplified worlds, they are not regarded as prototypical bachelors. Thus, Fillmore demonstrates that conventional definitions are often related to cultural prototypes. By highlighting the role of conceptual models in language usage, Fillmore's frame semantics indicates one of the ways in which we can account for the prototypical meanings of words when used by different societies.

3.3 Sweetser (1987)

Sweetser's analysis of the English word *lie* (1987) similarly argues against traditional semantics that tends to rely on 'checklist feature definitions' as they do not allow for gradations within a category denoted by a word. As Sweetser notes, lexical categories can have 'better or worse members, or *partial* members' (1987: 43). Thus, the category denoted by the English word *lie* includes white lies, social lies, tall tales, fibs, and other better or worse examples of the prototypical lie. Moreover, although a lie is conventionally defined as a false statement, factual falsity is actually the least important definitional feature in relation to less prototypical examples of lies. Such an anomaly suggests that the dictionary definition of *lie* in terms of falsity is only valid in a simplified world.

Sweetser proposes that the prototypical and non-prototypical cases of the English word *lie* can only be fully understood in relation to a cultural model of language and information. In this cultural model, language is assumed to be informational and helpful in the unmarked discourse mode. She describes the informational model of knowledge as a series of assumptions and rules:

A norm-establishing 'meta-maxim':

(0) People normally obey rules

General cooperative rule:

(1) ***Rule***: Try to help, not harm.

(2) Knowledge is beneficial, helpful.

Combining belief (2) with rule (1) gives rise to:

(3) ***Rule***: Give knowledge (inform others); do not misinform.

From the model of knowledge and information:

(4) Beliefs have adequate justification.

(5) Adequately justified beliefs are knowledge (= are true).

(6) Therefore, beliefs are true.

(6) allows rule (3) to be reinterpreted as:

> **(7) *Rule*: Say what you believe (since belief = knowledge); do not say what you do not believe (this = misinformation)**

(Adapted from Sweetser 1987: 47)

Thus, according to this cultural model, speakers are assumed to be helpful, and will only communicate what they believe to be true. Consequently, hearers are normally ready to accept what is said to them; they only question the truth of a statement when they fear that their simplified discourse world does not correspond to reality, for instance when the source is naive, misinformed or wanting to deceive. Deviations from the prototypical lie can be accounted for in relation to the disruption or bending of informational exchange rules.

As Sweetser demonstrates, cultural models of information and discourse explain why in actual usage, the English word *lie* is much more complex than its straightforward definition as a false statement. She also briefly examines the presence of such models in the Malagasy and Lebanese communities and concludes that although these cultures differ quite significantly from that of the English speaking community, they have 'similar understandings of lying and of the general power and morality dimensions of informational exchange' (Sweetser 1987: 62).

3.4 Lakoff (1987)

Lakoff elaborates on the function of prototypes in his theory of idealized cognitive models (1987). Idealized cognitive models structure mental space, which are 'like possible worlds in that they can be taken as representing our understanding of hypothetical and fictional situations' (Lakoff 1987: 282). The simplified world described by Fillmore to account for the prototypical case of bachelor is an example of an idealized cognitive model. Similarly, Sweetser's description of the informational model of discourse is a more complex example.

In his discussion of the category defined by the lexeme *mother*, Lakoff (1987: 74 - 76) provides an interesting example of how a cluster of converging idealized cognitive models can give rise to prototype effects. The classical definition of *mother* is a woman who has given birth to a child. However, such a definition ignores other meanings associated with motherhood, which Lakoff describes in terms of models:

The genetic model: the female who contributes the genetic material is the mother

The nurturance model: the female adult who nurtures and raises a child is the mother

The marital model: the wife of the father is the mother

The genealogical model: the closest female ancestor is the mother

(Lakoff 1987: 74)

Lakoff demonstrates that the concept of mother involves all of these individual models, which converge to form a concept of mother which is psychologically more basic than the models taken individually. The point of convergence gives rise to the prototypical concept of *mother*.

What is particularly relevant to our discussion is Lakoff's explanation of social stereotypes, which are important in defining cultural expectations. In his analysis of the category denoted by the linguistic label *housewife*, he observes that the housewife stereotype arises from a stereotypical view of nurturance, associated with the nurturance model of mother. According to this view, housewives are mothers who are

able to provide the best care for their children because they remain at home all the time. Thus, stereotypes are examples of prototype effects.

Lakoff characterizes social stereotypes in the following manner:

> Social stereotypes are cases of metonymy - where a subcategory has a socially recognized status as standing for the category as a whole, usually for the purpose of making quick judgments about people. (1987: 79)

Since stereotypes have a role in characterizing concepts and defining society's expectations, they affect the meaning value attached to particular linguistic labels. For example, consider the connotations attached to the noun phrase *the working mother*. As Lakoff explains, the category denoted by *the working mother* is not simply a mother who happens to be working; instead one of the ways it is conventionally defined is in contrast to the stereotypical housewife-mother, with the result that the working mother is negatively viewed as one who cannot provide the best care for her children because she is not at home all the time.[3] Thus, prototypes can be defined against other prototypes.

3.5 Prototype theory for analyzing written texts

The studies by Fillmore, Sweetser, and Lakoff focus on individual lexemes in an attempt to discover the cultural and social frameworks that explain their actual usage. They demonstrate that the meanings of these linguistic items are influenced by prototypes arising from particular cognitive models or simplified representations of situations in the social worlds of the language-user.

Second-language written texts are framed by cultural contexts that differ significantly from those of texts written by Anglo-American writers, for whom English is a first language. If, as prototype semantics suggests, word meaning is characterized by prototypicality through the influence of underlying cultural models, then one approach to discovering the culturally significant meanings in second-language texts is through an examination of the way prototypical meanings are encoded, evoked, and exploited.

In this paper, I would like to argue that the theory of prototype semantics provides us with a means of understanding the generation of cultural meanings in second-language written texts. In order to do so, I shall examine some of the prototypical meanings generated by a second-language text in English and its relationship to an underlying cultural model. The significance of this prototypical meaning is then perceived in terms of the narrative structure of the text.

4. 'White Tigers'

4.1 Choice of text

'White Tigers' comes from a collection of five narratives, entitled The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1976), by Maxine Hong Kingston. It represents a piece of genuine second-language data as Kingston's first language is a Chinese dialect of Canton and she only acquired English as a second language in school. However, she chooses to write in English and her mastery of the language is evident in the creative manipulation of language structures in her text. For example, she presents the Chinese legend of the female warrior Fa Mu Lan in the form of a first person narrative, which effectively allows her to assume the identity of the heroine.

The autobiographical text recounts the author's experiences as a first-generation Chinese American. An important theme is the influence of traditional Chinese values on Kingston's perception of herself as a Chinese female child. The two ways in which the text evokes a cultural framework are: by the incorporation of Chinese sayings and by the retelling of a Chinese legend. Through the traditional Chinese sayings, we come to understand one of the prototypical meanings associated with the Chinese female child. They also enable readers to understand the significance of the legend of Fa Mu Lan, the heroine who achieves lasting fame by taking her father's place in battle in an act of filial duty. Kingston's retelling of the legend depends significantly on the cultural prototype evoked through the Chinese sayings.

The choice of this text is motivated by the fact that it represents a sophisticated piece of second-language writing that explicitly draws on cultural concepts and evokes a cultural framework. While this type of text may seem less susceptible to cross-cultural misinterpretation, the care with which it establishes and relies upon a specific cultural prototype for narrative significance emphasizes that the interpretation of second-language texts may depend heavily on the reader's awareness of such prototypical meanings and the extent to which the writer provides access to them.

4.2 A Summary of 'White Tigers'

'White Tigers' consists of three sections, clearly marked in the text by line spacing separating the sections. The Chinese sayings occur in the second and third sections. The first section highlights the influence of stories about Chinese female warriors on Kingston's perception of women's roles in Chinese culture and narrates the beginning of the legend of Fa Mu Lan as imagined by Kingston. The second section, which is also the longest of the three, is a first-person narration of the legend of Fa Mu Lan. It describes the fifteen years of training endured by the heroine on a mythical mountain, her return to save her father from being conscripted, her donning of men's armour, her successes in battle, her revenge on those who had exploited her family and her country, and finally, her reunion with her husband and his family. The final section reverts back to the reality of Kingston's experience as an American Chinese and her failure to achieve success according to the ideal of filial duty defined by the legend and conveyed indirectly through the Chinese sayings.

5. Language and culture in the text

5.1 Transmitting culture through language

'White Tigers' begins by emphasizing the importance of language in the transmission of culture:

> When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves. We could be heroines, swordswomen. (Kingston 1976: 19)

Here, Kingston refers to the popular Chinese pastime of storytelling, which not only entertains its listeners but communicates and promotes cultural values. The stories and legends of China recounted by the Chinese in America thus played a crucial role in defining cultural expectations for Kingston, and she signifies the importance of such language use with the original compound verb-noun 'talking-story'.

The opening sentences of 'White Tigers' also highlight the focus of our analysis: some of the cultural meanings associated with the lexemes *daughter* and *girl* in the text. Taking note of Quinn and Holland's observation that cultural knowledge is 'learned from others, in large part from their talk' (1987: 22), our analysis begins by examining the Chinese sayings recorded in 'White Tigers' as examples of language functioning as cultural instruction in the text.

5.2 Analysis of Chinese sayings in the text

Analyzing the Chinese sayings in terms of illocutionary acts and perlocutionary effects associated with utterances (Austin 1962) reveals some of their pragmatic functions. In the following passage from the second section of 'White Tigers', the two underlined Chinese sayings are quoted by a corrupt man to justify his exploitation of females:

> "Oh, come now. Everyone takes the girls when he can. The families are glad to be rid of them. '<u>Girls are maggots in the rice</u>.' '<u>It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters</u>.'" He quoted me the sayings I hated. (Kingston 1976: 43. Emphasis mine)

The illocutionary force of the sayings is directed towards justification and agreement, and relies upon the assumption and acknowledgement of their status as pieces of cultural wisdom. However, their perlocutionary effect is to anger the listener, Fa Mu Lan, whom the speaker mistakenly regards as a male.

The next passage, from the third section of 'White Tigers', presents three Chinese sayings:

> When one of my parents or the emigrant villagers said, "Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds," I would thrash on the floor and scream so hard I couldn't talk. I couldn't stop.
>
> "What's the matter with her?"
>
> "I don't know. Bad I guess. You know how girls are. 'There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls.'"
>
> "I would hit her if she were mine. But then there's no use wasting all that discipline on a girl. 'When you raise girls, you're raising children for strangers.'"
>
> (Kingston 1976: 46. Emphasis mine)

The sayings quoted by the emigrant villagers and Kingston's mother have several perlocutionary effects: Kingston is upset by them, which, as a child, she demonstrates by throwing a tantrum; however, their effect on the villagers is to evoke tacit consent and encourage other similar thoughts. Thus, in contrast to the sayings in the previous passage, the illocutionary force of the sayings in this passage succeeds when directed towards a specific audience - the emigrant villagers - since they refer the listeners to common knowledge as a basis for understanding behaviour and justifying action, or, in this case, the absence of action.

Common sayings assume a body of cultural knowledge shared by speakers. Thus, in the above passage, the saying 'There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls' is preceded by the sentence 'You know how girls are'; the second-person pronoun in subject position, the predicate 'know', and the non-specific, generic noun 'girls', together contribute to the effect of emphasizing shared knowledge, which the addressee already knows, and the speaker reiterates as a reminder.

In the next two passages, also from the third section of the 'White Tigers', the sayings once again serve as reference points of common knowledge, which is then used to facilitate reasoning and understanding.

> It was said, "There is an outward tendency in females," which meant that I was getting straight A's for the good of my future husband's family, not my own.
>
> (Kingston 1976: 47. Emphasis mine)

> They only say, "When fishing for treasures in the flood, be careful not to pull in girls," because that is what one says about daughters. But I watched such words come out of my own mother's and father's mouths; I looked at their ink drawing of poor people snagging their neighbor's flotage with long flood hooks and pushing the girl babies on down the river. And I had to get out of hating range. (Kingston 1976: 52. Emphasis mine)

The presence of the generic nouns, 'females' and 'girls', as well as the existential 'there', help to raise these sayings to the status of gnomic utterances and collective wisdom. However, close analysis reveals that they convey not proven truths but certain cultural notions about female children. The latter passage indicates that the imagery of one such saying even assumed concrete visual representation in a pen and ink drawing, perhaps as a means of making its meaning explicit and more memorable; the drawing clearly made an indelible impression on Kingston.

5.3 Cultural propositions

Taken together, these sayings build up a picture of how daughters are regarded in Chinese culture, thereby suggesting one cultural framework against which female children are prototypically defined. The cultural framework erected by the Chinese sayings in the text become clearer when their propositions are stated:

1. Girls are maggots in the rice.

The copula 'be' allows girls to be equated with maggots, which should be gotten rid of, as the context of the passage in which this saying appears makes clear.

Girls = maggots in the rice

proposes 1) Girls ruin what is good

2)) Girls should be avoided or removed.

IIa. It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters.

IIb. There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls.

IIa and IIb are versions of the same proposition:

Raising geese is more profitable than raising girls.

This proposition implies:

1) Female children are of less value than livestock.

2) They have to be raised but do not bring returns.

III. Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds.

Kingston's reaction to this saying, as described in the passage containing this saying, suggests that cowbirds are viewed positively. Therefore, feeding them would be regarded as a waste of resources.

Feeding girls = feeding cowbirds

implies 1) Rearing female children is a waste of resources.

IV. When you raise girls, you're raising children for strangers.

This saying entails the assumption that female children will be married off and therefore, play no role in maintaining the family name (an important concept in Chinese culture).

Raising daughters = raising children for strangers

implies 1) Daughters only contribute to their husbands' families ('strangers').

2) Daughters contribute little to their own families.

V. There is an outward tendency in females.

Kingston's commentary accompanying this saying reveals it is to be interpreted in the context of marriage, in which a daughter's loyalties and contributions belong to her husband and parents-in-law. The saying is based upon the knowledge that daughters eventually marry outside their clan.[4]

It implies 1) Daughters, their loyalties and contributions, will belong to their husband's family.

and therefore, 2) Females contribute little to their own families.

VI. When fishing for treasures in the flood, be careful not to pull in girls

Simply put, this saying proposes:

1) Daughters are worthless, useless

and therefore, 2) Having daughters should be avoided.

Representing the sayings in terms of their propositions and implications reveals that they encourage quite horrifying assumptions about and attitudes towards females. In fact, they generate prototype effects in the text by repeatedly emphasizing a negative view of daughters as worthless, bringing little or no benefit to their families. This view is closely linked to the notion of economic gain and practical value.

The traditional prejudices surrounding female children in traditional Chinese culture are well-documented (Hsu 1949, 1981; Lee 1960; Kristeva 1986; Tu 1985; Tsai 1986). According to feudal and Confucian customs, only sons continue the family name and inherit family property. A daughter, on the other hand, is expected to marry into another family; any contributions she makes will be to her husband's family and her sons will bear the father's surname. It also follows from this that raising daughters is a waste of limited resources. In contrast, a son is highly valued and socially significant.

5.4 A prototypical meaning of daughter

Since one of the recurrent propositions generated by the above adages is that female children are worthless, this gives rise to a prototype effect associated with the cultural concept of female children in the text: a daughter is stereotypically perceived in terms of her lack of worth or tangible contribution to the family that raises her. This cultural definition may be represented as:

Daughter = minus Value

Daughters are thus associated with all that is negative, and Kingston draws upon this connotation in the following passage:

> "Stop that crying!" my mother would yell. "I'm going to hit you if you don't stop. Bad girl! Stop!" . . .
>
> "I'm not a bad girl," I would scream. "I'm not a bad girl." I might as well have said, "I'm not a girl." (Kingston 1976: 46)

Kingston's mother uses the adjective 'bad' to mean naughty. Its equivalent in Chinese would be the word 坏 [huai], which carries both the meanings of rotten and naughty. Even as Kingston verbally denies the label *bad girl*, she wryly concludes that this is tantamount to denying her identity as a female. Within a cultural framework in which a female child is prototypically regarded as intrinsically worthless, the adjective 'bad' becomes redundant in collocation with the noun 'girl'. Consequently, one can only deny that one is not a bad girl when one is not a girl, that is, a boy.

If we only relied on dictionary definitions of the lexeme *daughter*, we would lose its cultural import in 'White Tigers'. Understandably, dictionaries tend to restrict themselves to basic definitions of daughter in terms of the relationship between parent and female child. However, as Lyons points out:

> ... many of the concepts with which we operate are culture-bound, in the sense that they depend for their understanding upon socially transmitted knowledge, both practical and propositional, and vary considerably from culture to culture (1981: 308)

Thus, we need to go beyond the dictionary definition to account for the cultural status (or lack of it) denoted by the nouns *girl* or *daughter*. Kingston's text encourages us to locate their meanings within a cultural matrix, to interpret their significance through the model of traditional Chinese expectations evoked by the traditional sayings, which may or may not correspond to reality but certainly represent a strong cultural influence.

5.5 The legend of Fa Mu Lan

The prototypical meaning of the lexemes *girl* and *daughter* in the framework of traditional Chinese culture arising from the Chinese sayings helps us to relate the Fa Mu Lan legend to Kingston's experiences as an American Chinese. The legend of the woman warrior Fa Mu Lan presents an alternative prototype, a daughter who achieves the status of the valued female child because she fulfils the most important obligation of all Chinese children: filial duty. By retelling the legend in her own words, Kingston seeks to dismantle the negative cultural stereotyping attached to the female child. Thus, it is in her refusing to accede to the cultural expectation that she 'would grow up a wife and a slave' (Kingston 1976: 20), that Kingston chooses the alternative definition of *daughter* articulated through the song of the warrior woman:

> She said I would grow up a wife and a slave, but she taught me the song of the warrior woman, Fa Mu Lan. I would have to grow up a warrior woman.
>
> (Kingston 1976: 20)

The impact of this legend sung to Kingston by her mother suggests once again the efficacy of language in transmitting cultural values.

However, even though the legend of Fa Mu Lan represents a Chinese female who manages to escape the negative status accorded to a Chinese female, it upholds the cultural roles expected of females. The fact that Fa Mu Lan can only achieve her battle victories disguised as a man underscores the traditional stereotyping of male and female. Moreover, while she manages to rise above the prototypical definition of women as unvalued daughters, she fulfils all the cultural duties by becoming a wife, bearing a son, and returning to her parents-in-law as a dutiful daughter in the end:

> Wearing my black embroidered wedding coat, I knelt at my parents-in-law's feet, as I would have done as a bride. "Now my public duties are finished," I said. "I will stay with you, doing farmwork and housework, and giving you more sons."
>
> (Kingston 1976: 45)

Hence, Fa Mu Lan's legendary status is partially derived from her ability to accomplish what is expected of the Chinese female.

Kingston's retelling of the legend of Fa Mu Lan is rendered unusual by the use of first-person narration. This effectively allows her to narrate the legend as her own story, merging her identity with that of the warrior woman. The legend thus becomes a form of autobiography, not only enabling Kingston to incorporate elements from her own life into the story but also to express her own awareness and implicit desire to match cultural norms and aspirations. This awareness is indicated through the pattern of modals in the narrative. For example, in a passage describing the heroine's choice between returning to her family or staying on the mountain to undergo training, there is a repeated use of the modal 'can':

> "What do you want to do?" the old man asked. "You can go back right now if you like. You can go pull sweet potatoes, or you can stay with us and learn how to fight barbarians and bandits."

> "You can avenge your village," said the old woman. "You can recapture the harvests that the thieves have taken. You can be remembered by the Han people for your dutifulness." (Kingston 1976: 22-23. Emphasis mine)

Here, the modal 'can' expresses possibility and permission: both sets of choices (to go back and work on the farm versus learning to fight and avenge the village) are open to the heroine. The second set of actions (learning to fight, to avenge the village, to recapture the harvest) traditionally belongs to the domain of the male Chinese hero; however, in the above passage, the old woman is offering the heroine the possibility of fulfilling the traditional Chinese obligations to her family, village and nation. Consequently, in the final sentence, the modal 'can' emphasizes the possibility of being remembered by the nation as an example of dutifulness.

In later passages, the heroine's duty is marked by deontic modals. For example, in the following passage, a double emphasis on obligation occurs when the modal 'would' is followed by 'have to':

> By looking into the water gourd I was able to follow the men I would have to execute. (Kingston 1976: 30. Emphasis mine)

Moreover, fulfilment of one's duty can be enforced or self-motivated, as represented by the different modals in the following passage:

> I saw the baron's messenger leave our house, and my father saying, "This time I must go and fight." I would hurry down the mountain and take his place. (Kingston 1976: 33. Emphasis mine)

'Must' conveys a high degree of obligation, and here, it is used in relation to an obligation that is unjustly enforced, as the heroine's father is too old to fight in wars. In contrast, the second modal 'would' suggests a willingness and decision on the narrator's part to serve as her father's substitute, out of filial piety.

The final paragraph of Kingston's Fa Mu Lan story is also characterised by a repetition of the modal 'would':

> My mother and father and the entire clan would be living happily on the money I had sent them. My parents had bought their coffins. They would sacrifice a pig to the gods that I had returned. From the words on my back, and how they were fulfilled, the villagers would make a legend about my perfect filiality [sic]. (Kingston 1976: 45. Emphasis mine)

The past tense of these modals alert us to the dual time frames created by Kingston's retelling of the legend in first-person narration. Within the time frame of the legend, Fa Mu Lan manages to fulfil her obligations to her parents and her village; thus, the modals 'would' are epistemic and predictive. However, where the narrator 'I' is assumed to be Kingston, the passage is interpreted in the light of Kingston's own time and our awareness of her sense of failure as a Chinese daughter, causes us to retrospectively interpret the modals 'would' as not only signifying the past time of legend, but also the remoteness of the possibility of these events. In comparison, the present tense modal 'will' would suggest a much firmer future possibility. These past tense modals belong to the category of 'boulomaic modality' (Simpson 1993: 48): they convey a sense of desire on the narrator's part, a wish that these events were true.

The pattern of deontic and boulomaic modality in Kingston's retelling of the Fa Mu Lan legend indicates her desire to meet the cultural expectations embodied by the legendary heroine, who never relinquishes her female duties even as she manages to achieve significance in Chinese society. In fact, Kingston's retelling of the legend emphasizes that Fa Mu Lan's greatness lies in the fulfilment of her duties and her intense filial piety. Kingston only manages a vicarious achievement of the legend's status in her storytelling; in her own life, she remains burdened by the negative cultural meanings associated with the label of *the female child*. Thus, in the penultimate paragraph of the text, she falls back on the prototypical meaning of the lexeme *girl* evoked through the Chinese sayings when she concludes: 'But I am useless, one more girl who couldn't be sold' (Kingston 1976: 52).

6. Conclusion

In his analysis of proverbs and their relationship to global knowledge structures, White suggests that narrative comprehension 'frequently proceeds by using existing knowledge structures to process new information and draw inferences about the social and moral implications of what is said; in other words, to get the point' (1987: 152). In 'White Tigers', our understanding of its central issues relies heavily on our grasp of a prototypical meaning denoted by the lexemes *girl* or *daughter* in the text. This prototypical meaning must be interpreted within the context of traditional Chinese culture that is evoked through the translated Chinese sayings. Without it, the significance of Kingston's retelling of the legend of Fa Mu Lan would be lost. The occurrence of the majority of the sayings in the context of Kingston's comparison of her Chinese American experience against the achievements of Fa Mu Lan emphasizes the cultural idealizations contained in the legend and explains some of the difficulties Kingston faces in her attempts to counter the negative stereotyping of Chinese daughters.

This example of a second-language text suggests that when a writer successfully communicates his or her native reality, he or she may do so by drawing on specific cultural models to contribute the cultural connotations of words and linguistic structures. As my analysis of Kingston's text indicates, native meanings can be generated in a non-native language in the form of prototypical meanings based on a specific cultural framework. Part of the successful communication of such meanings depends on how the writer provides access to the cultural framework. In 'White Tigers', this is effected through the presence of cultural sayings, which serve as sources of cultural assumptions, and the legend of Fa Mu Lan.

The theory of semantic prototypes, by drawing attention to the models underlying the meanings of words, reminds us that we need to look beyond dictionary definitions to the way different cultures apply linguistic labels in describing reality. It also suggests that semantic prototypes are some of the forms that cultural meanings may take. Although such a theory represents only one approach to understanding the relationship between language and culture, its insights are crucial if we are to look beneath the surface of the text.

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[1] The pinyin versions of the Chinese characters are enclosed in square brackets.

[2] The psychological reality of prototypes was first demonstrated by Rosch (1973) in her study of colour categories in Dani, a New Guinea language that has only two basic colour terms: *mili* and *mola*. Rosch discovered that when Dani speakers were asked for the best examples of *mili* and *mola*, they chose the focal colours in the range of colours designated by the colour terms. She named these focal colours cognitive reference points or prototypes.

[3] Apart from Lakoff's decriptions of *the working mother* and *the housewife*, there may be alternative meanings associated with such expressions: *the working mother* may be viewed positively, as a economic contributor or as one coping under difficult circumstances; on the other hand, *the housewife* may be negatively perceived as a non-wage-earner. However, Lakoff's observations highlight the fact that social stereotyping can affect our understanding and use of words.

[4] The clan in Chinese society is defined as all members with a common surname or family name, indicating that they are descended from the same ancestor. Traditionally, it is taboo to marry anyone with the same surname.

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MISLEADING CONTEXTS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AMBIGUITY IN THE CRYPTIC CROSSWORD CLUE

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Abstract

This paper investigates the intentional creation of ambiguity by composers of cryptic crossword puzzles. Taking a research question of 'what makes a cryptic clue more difficult to solve than a simple crossword clue?', it compares a sample of cryptic and quick crosswords from The Guardian *and attempts to isolate the linguistic factors that make the cryptic crosswords more difficult. The cryptics do not on the whole use more difficult vocabulary than the quicks, and both types of crossword indicate the senses and denotations of the target words in broadly similar ways. The cryptic crosswords employ more non-prototypical senses of target words, and make much use of lexical and syntactic ambiguity in their clue writing to create a 'misleading context' that leads the solver 'up the garden path'. It is argued that cryptic clues provide interesting material to investigate how we process ambiguity, and to explore verbal play and humour.*

'The composer ... does not have to mean what he says, but he must say what he means. He may attempt to mislead by employing a form of words which can be taken in more than one way, and it is your fault if you take it the wrong way, but it is his fault if you can't logically take it the right way.'

'Afrit' [A. F. Ritchie] 1949, (in Manley 1992: 59)

1. The cryptic crossword: genre and system

In this paper I will take a look at the oblique and curious world of the cryptic crossword. Though not widely utilised as a text type for academic research, it is of interest to the linguist as it represents creative employment of linguistic resources within specific conventions to produce a particular form of language as entertainment. Cryptic crosswords constitute a definite genre, with a discourse community whose members both work within, and seek to stretch, particular generic conventions. An analysis of the way this genre is operated by its discourse community can inform study of verbal play and linguistic humour: cryptic clues are primarily exercises in constructed ambiguity and so provide material for investigating how we process ambiguous language. It is an exceedingly widespread arena of language use, as the large popular press of puzzle collections and 'how to' manuals demonstrates. And for the language researcher, too, the cryptic crossword can provide excellent source material for illuminating many aspects of how a language can be operated as a creative system by its users.

I will begin by briefly sketching some aspects of language study that I feel could be informed by examination of crossword puzzles, and in particular cryptic crosswords. A large proportion of research has been psycholinguistic in nature, concentrating on lexical retrieval (Nickerson 1977; Goldblum & Frost 1988) or on analysing the component subskills of expert cryptic crossword processing, in the belief that this can inform us about the nature of strategies utilised by good readers (Underwood et al. 1988; 1994). Of particular interest to such researchers is the interaction between orthographic and phonological knowledge when carrying out lexical searches.

In contrast, study of the crossword as genre has been left largely to the discourse community itself. Many manuals describing the metalinguistic code of the cryptic have been written (the best being Manley 1992, MacNutt & Robbins 1966, and Abbott 1982), but good as they are on aspects of the code relevant to the setter/solver, they fall short of analysing many features of interest to linguists, such as syntactic structure and stylistic variation. One approach could focus upon the coding system as it is employed by different setters. All published cryptics are the creations of individual writers whose

> ... art is to construct miniature texts delicately poised between (at least) two contexts, sharing finally the resonances of both.
>
> (Noreiko 1983: 238)

A cryptic clue shares with literary discourse the property of being

> ... dependent only on itself for its 'reading'. It generates a world of internal reference and relies only on its own capacity to project.
>
> (Carter & Nash 1990: 38)

Crossword enthusiasts are able to characterise the work of individual compilers - stating, for example, that The Guardian's John Graham, known as 'Araucaria', 'shows great flair' while not being strictly orthodox (Manley 1992: 152). 'Orthodox' is expressed in terms of the ground rules of the genre which were codified by a number of well known crossword setters through the mid-twentieth century, in particular D. S. MacNutt, better known as 'Ximenes'. Both Ximenes and his successor at The Observer, Azed, have acted as a kind of 'supreme court' of the crossword world, laying down judgments about what constitutes acceptable grammar and phraseology within clues. Genre analysts concerned with the issue of the extent to which genre codification is prescriptive may take interest in this fully documented history of a genre's emergence, as well as the setters' debate between orthodox "square dealers" (or 'Ximeneans'), and "legerdemainists" who seek to stretch the generic conventions to their limits in order to inject more creativity into the process (Putnam & Snape 1975: 7-8; cf. Manley 1992: 58ff. on Ximenean orthodoxy). The following classic clue is immensely popular with many setters and solvers, but is disliked by the strictly orthodox (e.g. Manley 1992: 61):

[1] HIJKLMNO (5)[1]

A third approach might investigate the way crosswords exploit the systemic features of language to encode, or merely suggest, or even to hide, meaning. Cryptic clues are exercises in constructed ambiguity, and Noreiko (1983) has used them to illustrate how a given lexical item (in this case in French, although it is equally applicable to English) can be

> ... multi-valued, polysemantic, or homonymous, even of unclear syntactic status, until it can be assigned to an appropriate context.
>
> (Noreiko 1983: 238)

The very nature of the cryptic crossword focuses attention on the interaction of word forms with senses of words. As the ultimate objective is to arrive at a *form*, to be entered in the grid, the setter is quite free to manipulate the senses selected from different readings of the text en route to the solution. Just as in more natural uses of language, ambiguity can be produced in a cryptic clue through choice of lexis, syntax, or, more commonly, a combination of the two. A small amount of research has been carried out into the linguistic structure of crossword clues - mostly in languages other than English (Hellinger 1975, German; Stratmann 1978, English & German; Noreiko 1983, French; Bezerra 1990, Brazilian Portuguese; Vantu 1991, Romanian).

The approach in this paper will be from this direction: an interest in the techniques cryptic crosswords employ to indicate, and to conceal, 'meaning', and in the kinds of knowledge, both of language and of the world, that we employ to comprehend them. Now I will briefly outline the specific objectives of the paper, and the method I have used to investigate them.

1.1 Aims

The commonplace view of crosswords is that simple 'paraphrase' crosswords, such as *The Guardian*'s quick crosswords, are 'easy' while cryptic crosswords are 'hard'. The situation is actually far more complex, with different grades of difficulty holding between different published series of both types of puzzle. However, a leap in degree of accessibility is clearly evident if one tries to move from one of the more challenging quick crosswords, like *The Guardian*'s, to even one of the more straightforward cryptics, such as *The Observer*'s

'Everyman'. To explore the factors that determine difficulty in crossword processing across this particular division presents a useful means to investigate the questions raised in the last paragraph.

One obvious possibility is that the vocabulary employed in 'harder' crosswords is more obscure. This is true of the advanced 'barred' crosswords, like *The Observer Magazine*'s 'Azed', for which a good dictionary is recommended by the setter. But the ordinary 'blocked' cryptics in the daily papers are designed to be solved in situations like trains or cafeterias where dictionaries are not available, and so the target words must predominantly be of everyday frequency. A more likely possibility concerns the senses possessed by the target forms and how prototypically they are associated with the form in question. I would suggest that solvers of 'harder' crosswords need to call upon the following broad classes of knowledge:

- **linguistic competence**: knowledge *of* the relationships between lexemes within the mind, and the connections between lexemes and the outer world; knowledge *of* syntax and phonology.

- **learnt knowledge**: knowledge *about* the orthography, and perhaps the etymology, of written word-forms; knowledge *about* the universe of discourse shared between setter and solvers.

It is difficult to be so clear-cut, particularly in terms of determining precisely where linguistic knowledge ends and knowledge of the world begins. For example, to know the denotation of the word 'Impi' one must also know who the Impi are and where they are from (warriors from southern Africa). Though I have stressed the distinction between knowledge that is acquired and intuitive, and that which is learnt and conscious, this too is probably more of a continuum. The distinction is useful, however, as research suggests that there may be two parallel processes operating in mental word searches: a rapid one working 'below the level of awareness', and a slower search that is 'open to introspection' (Nickerson 1977: 716). Hence, I have classed orthographic knowledge more as 'learnt' because a solver needs to consciously reflect upon his/her knowledge of a spelling system when arriving at a given form, even though reading is an acquired language skill. In this paper it is the former category, knowledge *of* the language, that will concern us - in particular the way the interplay of semantic and syntactic knowledge creates, and conceals, meanings.

Finally, it is important to comment briefly on the crossword-specific linguistic knowledge possessed by expert members of the discourse community. The word 'Impi', given above, will be immediately recognised by all regular cryptic solvers as a conventional 'synonym' for 'warrior'. Indeed, whenever a four-letter form for 'warrior' is required as either an answer or as part of an answer, 'Impi' is almost certain to be it. All novice solvers need to acquire this 'crossword-speak', as well as the body of lexis that acts as indicators of such cryptic categories as anagrams[2], etc. In terms of the above classification this is knowledge both *of* and *about* language in that expert solvers will both automatically recognise the specialist function of such lexemes, and be able to introspectively analyse their role in indicating the parts of clues and targets. Until a solver is conversant with this specialist 'L3' it is an obvious factor of difficulty; to an expert solver, the ability of a setter to manipulate the ambiguity of such items between their specialist and non-specialist senses remains a source of potential difficulty.

1.2 Method

To make useful generalisations about the semantic relations within crosswords it is not sufficient to analyse a single example of each type. Therefore a corpus has been built up containing 169 clues and solutions from six cryptic crosswords selected from successive issues of *The Guardian* in January 1995, representing a week's cross-section of the paper's puzzle. *The Guardian* uses named (or pseudonymous) setters, and the idiosyncrasies of different setters' work may affect the results. However I seek to arrive at the overall design policy of the crossword, as determined by the crossword editor, and which presumably will be reflected in the work of all its contributors. *The Guardian* crossword has been characterised by one general introduction to cryptic solving as 'interesting' but 'sometimes complex', containing 'up-to-the-minute allusions' and featuring 'extensive cross-references between clues' (Kindred & Knight 1993: 21). A sample covering a number of setters should capture more of what is generalisable about their work.

In the next section of the paper I will begin by looking at ways in which crosswords exploit semantic knowledge to encode, allude to, or hide meaning. Some comparison is necessary with quick crosswords in order to meet the explanatory aim of drawing conclusions about the particular techniques cryptic crosswords employ. To this end I have collected a secondary corpus which contains the quick crosswords published in *The Guardian* on the same days as the six cryptics. (There are only five of these as there was no quick crossword on the Saturday in question.) Full details of all the crosswords selected can be found in the References, as well as the method used to cite example clues in the following text.

Section 3 will give an account of a small-scale experiment carried out to investigate how different the semantic components of cryptic and quick crossword clues really are. In the last section I will show from this that what distinguishes the two forms of crossword, and accounts for a large degree of difficulty in the cryptic type, is the interplay that exists between the lexical and syntactic systems in creating and resolving ambiguity.

2. Meaning and the crossword clue

2.1 Sense and denotation in the quick crossword

Quick crosswords mainly operate by suggesting the sense relations that hold between clue and target: in a clue 'Difficult' with the target 'Hard', for example, this is the relation of synonymy between the two lexemes. At the level of quick crosswords it is not necessary to be concerned about the partial nature of the synonymy: any *form* that can possibly be cognitively synonymous with the clue will be a member of the set of possible targets. Thus, because HARD and DIFFICULT are 'incapable of yielding sentences with different truth-conditions' (Cruse 1986: 88) when inserted into a sentence frame like the following:

Brain surgery is a _____ skill to master

no attention need be paid to the range of senses in which the two lexemes are not compatible, e.g.

Kim is a { difficult / *hard } child
This a { hard / *difficult } pillow

It is the synonymy of *lexical units*, that is the identifiably discrete senses of polysemous lexemes (Katamba 1994: 143), rather than the lexemes themselves that forms the basis of equivalence between crossword clues and targets. A relationship of synonymy can also hold between an *expression* like:

[2] Absolute tyrannical ruler (8) [G7721Q]

and its target 'dictator'. It could be argued that crosswords work entirely by means of exploiting sense relations, with the exception of the occasional 'quiz' type clue in quick crosswords, such as:

[3] City delivered by Jeanne d'Arc (7) [G7722Q]

for which 'Orléans' is the target of a referring expression. Such clues are not common in *Guardian* quicks, and even rarer in cryptics.

However, just as it is incorrect to take sense as being a more basic type of meaning than denotation in general terms (Lyons 1977: 211), it cannot be assumed that crossword solving operates without reference to the denotation of a lexeme. One way to create a frame to test the synonymy of [2] would be by the construction of a referring expression which describes one of the denotata of the two terms:

The _____ of Germany was Adolf Hitler

[2] passes the synonymy test with this frame. Again, the fact that this descriptive synonymy may be partial (depending upon whether one believes that 'dictator' necessarily entails 'tyranny') does not undermine the validity of this particular clue-target relationship. Many clues are similarly synonymous with their answers

simply because they are descriptive of a common denotatum, and this is particularly so when the clue is an analytic or synthetic paraphrase. Such clues operate like dictionary definitions - hence the use of the term 'definition' by writers on crosswords - though there are important differences, to which we shall now turn.

Reasons of space, and the need to avoid making a clue too obvious, dictate that a crossword clue must always be less complete than a dictionary definition. However, crossword 'definitions' frequently include clues of this style:

[4] Punctuation mark (5) [G7723Q]

which clues 'colon' - but why not 'comma', or 'point', not to mention all the other possible answers disallowed only by the specified number of letters? The clue is superordinate to the answer, and indeed crossword compilers make frequent use of hierarchical sense relations, almost always in the form of the clue being superordinate to the target. This is justifiable given that a crossword is not a dictionary, but a word game: the solver is asked to carry out a search through a certain class of lexemes. Though hyponymy is the most common form of lexical superordination in crosswords, there are also to be found relations of meronymy (part-whole) and troponymy (manner of doing), and taxonomy, illustrated by the following:

[5] Army unit (8) [G7720Q] - 'division'
[6] Weep noisily (3) [G7721Q] - 'sob'
[7] Species of crow (5) [G7721Q] - 'raven'

Setters tend to be rather vague when it comes to describing sense relations: for example, the former *Daily Telegraph* crossword editor May Abbott, in an otherwise entertaining and informative book, blithely describes 'tern' as a synonym of 'bird' (1982: 34). Accuracy of terminology may not matter greatly to the setter; but it seems more important that they should be aware of the distinction between the equivalence of two forms (synonymy) and the superordinate relationship exemplified by 'bird'→"tern', as this could be a major variable determining the difficulty of a given word search.

Quick crossword clues, therefore, are not really 'definitions', but will be better described as meaning indications (MI). They are most likely to trigger the solution through networks of sense relations, but denotative equivalence or inclusion may also play a part. We will move on now to the cryptic, and ask if it indicates meaning in comparable ways.

2.2 Meaning indications in the cryptic crossword

Almost all cryptic clues possess a part that crossword professionals label the 'definition', but which I will term the MI (meaning indication) for the reasons specified above. In a large number of clues the MI is supplemented by a part known within the crossword discourse community as the 'subsidiary indication' (Manley 1992: 30). To label its function more explicitly I will term this the form indication (FI), as its purpose is to indicate the particular word *form* required through a metalinguistic code peculiar to the crossword puzzle. The FI gives cryptics one advantage over quicks in that the two parts of the clue can be cross-checked to confirm immediately whether a suggested answer is right or wrong. Of course, this also means that it becomes possible to clue MIs somewhat more 'loosely' than in the MI-only quick crossword. Typical cryptic clues come in one of three basic structures:

- **MI + FI**: the two parts can come in either order.

These clues are intended to be read in two ways: the misleading 'natural' way, and as a metalinguistic encoding of the sense and form of the target. Hence, there are two corresponding ways of analysing the syntax of the clue. [8] is an acceptable English sentence:

[8] Recalcitrant lads can cause malicious talk (7) [G20245]

Malicious talk appears to fit seamlessly in to the sentence as the object complement of *cause*. Its constituent structure can be analysed as in Figure 1.

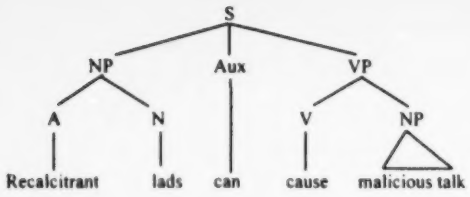
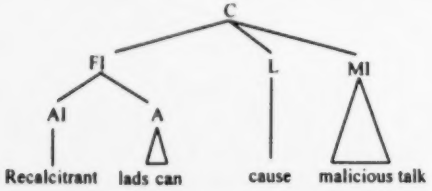


Figure 1: constituent structure analysis of clue [8]

But this FI is an example of the prototypical cryptic clue, the anagram; to equate it with its solution, 'scandal', it becomes necessary to make a division around *cause*. In clue-syntax *malicious talk* is an equal constituent to *Recalcitrant lads* can, the two coordinated by the link word *cause*. Figure 2 uses a tree diagram to show how it should be parsed in order to be read as a cryptic clue.



Key: C = clue; FI = form indication; L = link; MI = meaning indication; A = anagram; AI = anagram indicator, i.e. word used to indicate position of anagram within the clue

Figure 2: [8] parsed as crossword clue

The majority of clues - 80% in the *Guardian* sample - possess variations on this type of structure, (though only about 25% of them can also be analysed as well formed English sentences - noun phrases being more common at around 39%, with 9% non-finite clauses, and a further 11% ambiguous; the issue is obscured by the degree of newspaper-style ellipsis of articles and so forth). One component of the clue obliquely describes the *form* of the target, while the other describes one of the target's *senses*.

- **MI + MI**: each part relates to different senses of a polysemous target, with a third misleading sense produced by their juxtaposition:

  [9] Flexible section of a gun-carriage (6) [G20245]

clues 'limber', the solver having to find the correct place in the clue to make the division, without being misled to think that the target is 'a part of a gun-carriage that is flexible'. More on this clue later. The 'double definition' constitutes 13% of the sample.

- **MI only**: in contrast to the descriptive definitions of the quick crosswords there is the 'cryptic definition', an indirect allusion to the target's meaning, often involving puns and wordplay:

  [10] One lacking a blooming partner? (10) [G20248]

This clues 'wallflower', and but for the inclusion of the pun *blooming* would actually be a fair description of the extension of one particular sense of the target. This type of clue plays an important role in cryptics as it maintains the possibility that not every clue can automatically be analysed into a MI + FI or MI + MI structure, and so increases the range of ambiguities available for those words commonly employed as crossword metalanguage. The word *lacking* in [10], for example, is often encountered as a subtraction

indicator, instructing the solver to delete a letter or letters from other words in the FI. The existence of this type of clue, permitting indicators to denote their full lexical value, rather than play a functional role, is certainly a factor that adds a degree of difficulty, and, indeed, interest to cryptic solving. About 7% of the clues in the sample were of this type.[3] Indeed, as I suggested above, the existence of the two corroborating sections of the cryptic clue permits MIs in all types of clue to be written more indirectly, providing the crossword setter with a further tool for controlling the level of difficulty.

3. Meaning indications: an experiment

3.1 Ne'er shall the twain meet?

The MI in [8], *malicious talk*, looks as if it could appear in a quick crossword. In general, there appears to be a fair degree of overlap in the styles of MIs in the two forms of puzzles, and there was an intriguing illustration of this in one of the quick crosswords in the sample:

[11] Flexible - part of a gun-carriage (6) [G7720Q]

This was published only the day before [9] which it effectively disambiguates. The answer, 'limber', might be thought a rather difficult target for a quick crossword, as with the sense of 'flexible', *adj.*, it is of quite low frequency (in contrast to the more common verbal usage 'to limber up'). As a meronym of 'gun-carriage' its denotation is technical, and also of low frequency. This is an interesting example of how degrees of difficulty holding between the different types of crossword need not necessarily be a result of the frequency of the words, or the typicality of the senses, used. It is hard to know whether this was an unfortunate slip on the part of the crossword editor, or whether such coincidences are an inevitable consequence of the huge number of puzzles being generated by the various dailies - or indeed if it was simply a case of two different compilers independently arriving at the same conclusion. Nevertheless, it was fortunate to uncover in a small sample such a clear example of how quicks and cryptics overlap in their approach to indicating meaning.

I decided to carry out a mini-experiment by converting a *Guardian* cryptic into a *Guardian*-type quick crossword by isolating the MIs, and then seeing if it could be distinguished from a genuine quick crossword. The allusive nature of the MI-only clue type renders it unsuitable for a quick, so it was necessary to select a crossword from the sample that did not employ this type of clue. Three of them fitted this requirement, and G20246 was the best of them as it also contained a selection of the MI+MI clue, which is common to both types of crossword along the lines of [9] and [11].

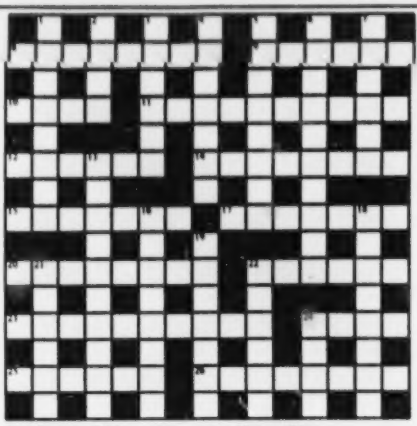
This form of clue can be viewed as a bridge through which quick crossword enthusiasts can begin to acquire the subskills of cryptic solving. The *Guardian* quick is noted for a large proportion of double MIs, in contrast to its rival dailies which employ almost exclusively single synonyms or short paraphrases. It was therefore desirable to include a representative proportion of double MIs in the mini-experiment. The selected puzzle, G20246, used them in six out of its 28 clues: at 21% a little higher than the average of 12% for the quicks in the sample, but not untypical of the occasional *Guardian* quick (e.g. G7719Q in the sample which had four double definitions in its 20 clues: 20%). In the modified puzzle, which can be seen in Figure 3, four of the doubles were disambiguated with a dash (9a, 10a, 2d, 7d), while two others in which the two MIs were separated by link words in the original (12a, 25a) were transferred to the modified puzzle without change.

Across

8 A brave leader (8)
9 Horse replacing another - campanologist (6)
10 Bill - the magistrate (4)
11 Traders having fits (10)
12 Lots of chimneys (6)
14 Nobleman abroad (8)
15 Student in first year (7)
17 Go down (7)
20 An idler (8)
22 Capital (6)
23 Orderly (10)
24 Stoves (4)
25 A piece of furniture for the office (6)
26 Choice (8)

Down

1 Father (8)
2 Some footwear - a hit (4)



3 Field event (6)
4 Eat (7)
5 Fussy decoration (4-4)
6 Direct opposite (10)
7 Footballers - red cards (6)
13 Injured people (10)
16 Huge (8)
18 Harmony (8)
19 Speech defect (7)
21 Refuge (6)
22 In clue (anag) - round which things may grow (6)
24 Wine (4)

Figure 3: Guardian crossword no. 20,446 (adapted version)

If any readers feel like attempting the experiment, I would be very interested to receive any comments (care of DAL). See how many answers you can enter in Figure 3 in 15 minutes, before reading any further. Then check the answers in the Appendix, which also contains a full analysis of the relation of the clues to the targets in the original. The MI for each clue is printed in bold face, and this should be sufficient to show how the quick-type clues for the modified puzzle were derived. Other than the clues dealt with above, the general principle was to transfer each MI unchanged, to test whether the solvers would accept it as a valid clue. The only problem lay with the unusual anagram clue 22d:

[12] Anagram in clue round which things may grow (6) [G20246]

This rather odd clueing of an anagram, employing Anagram as the indicator, permitted an easy transformation into a typical Guardian quick-type anagram clue, which is often marked by the abbreviation 'anag' and followed by a MI separated from the anagram by a dash, thus:

[13] In clue (anag) - round which things may grow (6)

The only other slight difficulties concerned whether to allow the rather cryptic MIs in 8a and 11a to be entered unchanged. However The Guardian occasionally employs punning clues in its quick crosswords, such as:

[14] Frightened to death? (6,5) [G7719Q]

which as a clue for 'scared stiff' would not be out of place in a cryptic crossword. Therefore the two MIs were judged acceptable. Finally, it must be noted that the 15x15 diagram was preserved, in contrast to the 13x13 diagram normal in a Guardian quick.

3.2 Procedure and results

The aims of the experiment, which was on a very small scale and intended to be hypothesis-forming, were as follows:

- to see how far the clues could be solved as quick-type clues, without necessity of support from the FIs;
- to see what, if anything, the participants noticed about the puzzle, and whether it confounded their expectations of a quick-type crossword in any way.

The puzzle was given to five native speakers of English, all post-graduate students at Edinburgh University, four of them students of Applied Linguistics. All of them were at least occasional solvers of quick crosswords, and one (C) was an occasional cryptic solver. The puzzle was given unmarked, as shown in Appendix 2, and the participants were told that it was a "definition type" crossword "drawn from" The Guardian. Two of the participants worked together, giving four data sheets. All but one of the five made rapid progress through the clues, and after approximately 15 minutes the number of clues solved correctly for each participant was counted.

Subject	A&B	C	D	E
Number of clues solved (out of 28)	9	12	18	5

Table 1 Number of clues solved by each participant after 15 minutes

The post-hoc comments of the participants were of as much interest as the above figures. All but one were surprised that the puzzle was a modified cryptic, and commented that they would not have been able to solve as many clues as quickly if they had been confronted with the undoctored original. On the other hand, all of them sensed something odd about the crossword, and commented during the exercise that it looked e.g. "a little cryptic". Clearly the fact that it was not directly photocopied from the newspaper probably alerted them to its likely unusualness; subject E was distracted by the idea that it was ambiguously cryptic/non-cryptic, and this distracted him from entering answers he thought too obvious.

Also interesting is an analysis of the responses to the individual clues (total number = 28):

Correct by all four subjects	4	20a, 25a, 4d, 16d
Correct by three out of four subjects	4	10a, 12a, 15a, 13d
Correct by two out of four subjects	4	8a, 26a, 2d, 19d
Correct by only one subject	7	9a, 14a, 23a, 2d, 3d, 22d, 24d
No correct answers	9	5d, 6d, 18d (all cross with 17a) 11a, 22a, 24a, 7d, 21d
All four incorrect		17a: 'descend' *for* 'subside'
Two out of four incorrect		19d: 'stammer' *for* 'stutter'
Total number of clues with at least one correct response	19	

Table 2 Analysis of subjects' response to derived clues

Clearly, the large number of clues solved were primarily due to the performance of D, but as she was not a previous cryptic-solver this is in itself interesting. The majority of the clues solved lay in the left-hand sector of the puzzle, so a longer time limit may have allowed more opportunity for all participants to enter more answers on the right side. 17a, 19d and 22a are probably unsatisfactory for a quick, though setters often use crossing letters as an aid to such unclear clues. Everyone had problems with the cryptic 11a, though two of the four got 'Geronimo' for 8a, which is a little less cryptic. Interestingly, there was an almost complete

solution rate for the two unchanged double-MI clues, though the four double-MIs disambiguated with a dash had a much lower solution rate.

No claims for statistical significance could possibly be made with such a small sample, but the fact that at least one correct answer was entered for 19 of the 28 clues, in a relatively short period, suggests it may be worth while to re-run this experiment under more tightly controlled conditions. It lends some weight to the argument that there is a considerable overlap between the techniques employed to indicate the senses and denotations of the targets of both kinds of crossword. Consequently, a major factor affecting crossword difficulty is the degree of opacity of the structure of a cryptic clue, and, correspondingly, the ability to distinguish the MI from the other parts of the clue is a subskill crucial to cryptic solving. This accords with the view of Underwood *et al.* (1994: 547) that this subskill should be investigated in order to build up a model of the expert cryptic solver.

A word search can be expected to be more difficult if it is based on a superordinate term rather than a synonym or paraphrase. Indeed, a survey of the experimental crossword suggests that it makes more use of superordinates in the MI than do the quick crosswords in the sample: approximately 35%, as compared with just over 10% of the quick clues (see Appendix - though it is not always clear-cut whether one expression is superordinate or equivalent to another, so this contains a only heuristic breakdown based upon my own intuitions, which would need to be tested more thoroughly). But the main hypothesis that I wish to derive from the experiment is that MIs in cryptic and quick crosswords are broadly similar (given the higher incidence of less specific superordinates in cryptics), and that it is the additional material in a cryptic clue that contributes the greatest element of difficulty. Most of the MIs in cryptic clues are not in themselves cryptic, hence the ease with which the solvers were able to solve them, but it is the addition of the FI, or the second MI, that adds the crucial cryptic ingredient. In the final section I will examine the working of this apparent paradox.

4. The creation of ambiguity in the cryptic clue

The experiment shows that cryptic clues are frequently structured around an explicit sense relation that holds between MI and target word. The crossword setter's art lies in finding a way of seamlessly blending MI with FI, or secondary MI, so that the solver finds it difficult to identify the transition, or is led to think about a field of meaning totally unrelated to the target. In [8], above, although the semantic field of the target is related to the sense of the clue, by parsing it as a well-formed sentence the solver would miss reading *lads can*, which is not a syntactic constituent, as an anagram. [9] is slightly more misleading as the solver may begin the word search for a part of a gun-carriage 'that is flexible'. Manley talks about aiming to construct the 'misleading context' (1992: 25), and Abbott writes that when she is 'in the compiler's shoes, we would enjoy leading our solver up the garden a little...' (1982: 21). This is the chief role of the form indication in the cryptic clue, exploiting the polysemy of lexemes, and the homonymy of word forms.

4.1 Polysemy and the form indication

The word *scrub* is well described by Noreiko's comments (on page 2): it can operate as a verb or noun, and as either it possesses multiple discrete senses. The following clue clearly selects one particular sense:

[15] Scrub the cooker top and clean out (6) [G20248]

The FI (a complex anagram of *clean* plus the "top" of cooker, i.e. *c*) can ultimately be used to double-check the answer. However, its primary role is to guide the solver away from the target, which is a synonym of another sense of the verb *scrub*: 'cancel'. Similarly, the collocation of *perception* and *smartness* in [16] suggests the sense of 'being clever' for *smartness* (which is also something for which poultry are not renowned):

[16] Poultry have no perception of smartness (4) [G20247]

This is a subtractive clue: a synonym of *perception*, 'ken', must be taken from a hyponym of *poultry*, 'chicken', to leave a synonym of another sense of *smartness*: 'chic'.

The misleading sense of *scrub* in [15] is more prototypical than its target sense, (though the same probably could not be said of the relationship between the two senses of *perception*.) Abbott (1982: 14) comments that the setter looks for unusual meanings of polysemous words, suggesting as an example how *butter* (noun) could have the sense of 'flattery', or even of 'goat' (i.e. 'an animal that butts')! The latter idea is a punning use of derivational morphology common in crosswords, which allows the setter to create a number of highly unprototypical pseudo-synonyms: 'adder' and 'summer' can both become synonymous with 'calculator' (Abbott 1982: 14). This is a good example of how semantic and other linguistic knowledge can intersect to create verbal humour. However, the evoking of a prototypical sense where a non-prototypical one is the key to the puzzle is a widespread crossword technique.

This raises interesting questions about the way we mentally process language. If *scrub*, 'clean with a scrubbing motion', is more prototypical than *scrub* 'cancel', does this mean it is more likely to be selected by the solver as s/he begins to read "Scrub ..."? Or is it the case, as implied by some psycholinguistic evidence, that we would activate all senses of *scrub*, those inappropriate to the context that follows being suppressed as it is processed? Intuitively it may seem that the prototypical sense is more likely to be prominent, but tests on the responses of people to lexical ambiguities such as:

"After taking the *right* turn ..." (i.e.. 'right-hand' or 'correct')

imply that processing is delayed, even when the subjects 'claimed not to have noticed the ambiguity' - and that this happens 'even when the context strongly biases them in one direction' (Aitchison 1994: 214-6). According to this model of language comprehension, all the polysemous senses of *smartness* should also be, however briefly, activated by the solver, as, indeed, should those of *perception*. But it has also been argued that the strongest links within the mental lexicon are those between co-ordinates within a semantic field, or words that commonly collocate; and that these are stronger than other structural relations within the vocabulary, such as hyponymy and synonymy (Aitchison 1994: 87, 97). Thus an interpretation of *smartness* and *perception* as co-ordinates within the semantic field of 'mental acuity' may be dominant over the 'smartness' ↔ 'chic' relation found in a different semantic field, and this could be the mechanism through which the misleading context operates to suppress the correct answer in the solver's mind. Cryptic clues offer an interesting means to investigate the effect of context on the resolution of lexical ambiguity.

4.2 Lexico-syntactic ambiguity and homonymy

The ambiguity of cryptic clues is actually far more complex than simply a matter of choice between polysemous senses of a lexeme. With [16] the solver is not too distracted from considering a number of synonyms of *smartness* in different semantic fields. But relatively few of the clues in the sample depend entirely upon the polysemy of individual items. Far more, in fact, depend on contrasting syntactic readings of the clue. The following clue can be read two ways:

[17] Signal to bring in a social worker (9) [G20245]

Is this a slightly abbreviated noun phrase, i.e. "A signal to ..."? Not if the clue is to be solved, for which it needs to be expanded to something like "It is signal to ...", giving 'important'.[4] It is not only necessary to find another sense for *signal*, but its word class must be changed too. The reading of the whole clue modulates with the lexeme choice: if *signal* is a noun, the infinitival complement is read as the purpose of the signal; if an adjective, the complement is semantically equivalent to the content clause in the paraphrase "It is important *that we bring in a social worker*". This is a case of lexico-syntactic ambiguity, as the MI is not only given multiple potential senses by the FI, but the two parts together create syntactical ambiguity that could lead equally well to the selection of distinct senses. The elliptical 'headline' style of the majority of clues plays an important role in creating this ambiguity. Another example is:

[18] Orderly sorting out messy attic (10) [G20246][5]

"An orderly who is sorting" (noun + elliptical relative clause) or "Sorting in an orderly manner" (adverb of manner + verb phrase)? Both are possible, but only the second leads to the answer 'systematic'. The MI

orderly, whatever semantic similarity may underlie the diachronic origins of its two readings, can no longer be termed a polysemous lexeme, but must be seen as two different morpho-syntactic words that are partial homonyms (Lyons 1977: 560-5). I would suggest that the increased semantic and syntactic distance of the two readings of *orderly* and *signal* has led to a further gradation of difficulty when compared to [15] and [16].

There seems to be a still further increase in difficulty with the next clue (which is also a nice illustration of the 'up-to-the-minute allusions' of the *Guardian* crossword)[6]:

[19] Certain quarters claim Peter Preston should be tried (7) [G20247]

There is no longer any question of syntactic ambiguity here: the syntactic form of *be tried* fixes it as denoting 'given a trial' (most probably in court). Only by isolating it from the context can it be matched with a synonym that also satisfies the metalinguistic encoding of the FI. It is also necessary to change its sense, to that of 'attempted': 'essayed'. This raises many questions about the maximisation of polysemy (Lyons 1977: 566-7), and whether all senses of the verb *try* should be seen as polysemous variants, or whether the differing senses are also different enough in their syntactic behaviour to warrant classification as partial homonyms. *Try* in the sense of 'court action' is more likely to be used in the passive, with a human patient, and shows a particular complementation pattern, viz. "He will be *tried for murder*". On the other hand, it could be seen as being part of a sense spectrum (Cruse 1986: 72) linked to *try* ↔ *attempt* by means of *try* ↔ *test*, e.g. "He will be tried in the post for a month".

As with the different degrees of synonymy, I do not think drawing a comprehensive theoretical distinction between polysemy and homonymy really matters to crossword setters and solvers. However, it could be useful in analysing the factors that make for crossword difficulty: the further the distance in sense and syntactic role between two readings of the form in the MI, the more difficult it will be for the solver to identify the target. One of the most pithy illustrations I have found of this came in a *Daily Telegraph* crossword:

[20] Have on last (4) [T21440]

While not an especially difficult double MI clue for 'wear' because *have on* leads fairly directly to the answer, I feel the use of *last* in its adverbial sense makes it quite hard to process as a route to a verbal target. It could really lead the solver up the garden path if the comparatively simple *have on* were replaced by something less direct, such as "Battle consumed the English last". Finally, I will end with a particularly skilful, and tricky, clue of this kind, taken from *The Independent*, in which three different senses are summoned from one form producing an excellent example of the misleading context:

[21] Bears causing real upset among bears (9) [I2559]

We have to banish all schemata of wild animals frolicking in the woods from our minds, and instead take one homonym of *bears* 'totes' and insert an anagram of *real* into (*among*) it to reveal a third: 'tolerates'. The use of *bears* as nouns apparent in the 'natural' reading of the sentence lead us far up the garden path away from the target, which is recoverable only through the 'deviant' reading of treating the word-forms in the clue as objects to be broken down and re-arranged.

5. Conclusion

Cryptic crosswords are a form of verbal play that make full use of the linguistic resources of the solver: primarily an exercise in relating senses of lexemes to forms of words, they involve the solver's whole semantic and syntactic competence in the resolution of ambiguity. I set out to attempt to identify the factors that transform the 'easier' activity of quick crossword solving into the more specialised one of cryptic solving, and such factors include:

- vocabulary of low frequency (though not so much at the 'daily' cryptic level)

- less specific clueing e.g. a higher ratio of superordinates to synonyms
- more cryptic meaning indications
- difficulty in distinguishing the meaning and form indications within the clue
- ambiguity in the role of indicator terms, e.g. *lacking* for subtraction, or *upset* for anagrams
- lexically ambiguous meaning indications with misleading senses suggested by context
- syntactically ambiguous clues
- non-ambiguous clues forcing a semantic and syntactic reading on to MI that is distant from target

It is likely that these factors are graded, so that the last quite possibly has the largest effect on crossword difficulty. While most research on crossword solving skill has focused on skills of manipulating individual words, there is a recognition that the subskills of processing entire cryptic clues need to be investigated - in particular relating to the fourth factor above (Underwood *et al.* 1994: 547). How solvers process the lexical sets used as indicators of anagrams and other clue types is also of interest, as this is another area, too broad to look at in this paper, calling for creative reading by the solver.

I would like to finish by suggesting again that the cryptic crossword offers much scope for exploration of the creative and productive use of language, in non-literary situations. I'll give the last word to Ximenes, the deviser of most of the ground rules for cryptic clue writing, and so one of the major founders of the cryptic crossword as genre:

> ... one can never fully forecast what new train of thought the sight or sound of a given word or phrase will set in motion. Nor can one anticipate the extent to which the English language can be manipulated with ingenuity and freshness.
>
> (MacNutt & Robbins 1966: 103)

Notes

[1] The answer is 'water', and is of course a pun on "H to O". The orthodox would object to its lack of any indication of the meaning of 'water', or of any metalinguistic indicator of the type of pun. The unorthodox, on the other hand, simply appreciate its ingenuity.

[2] Such as the fact that 'disorder' or 'wild' indicate a likely anagram, or 'skipping' a subtraction of some letters from another word (all examples drawn from the *Guardian* sample). This is far more than simply recognising a memorised list, and is in fact a productive process. Expert solvers are able to recognise particular semantic fields as crossword metalanguage—but this would form the basis for another paper.

[3] Although the *Independent* appears to make more use of them: in one example, 11 out of 30 clues were cryptic definitions (12,557); this possibly contributes to the reputation of the *Independent* crossword as being both more difficult and wittier than its rivals (cf. comments of Kindred & Knight 1993: 21).

[4] The FI is a charade: import + ant; 'ant' being a crossword-speak synonym for '(social) worker'.

[5] Anagram of *messy attic*. Despite the comments in this paragraph, this is a much easier clue than [17] for an expert solver due to the saliency of *sorting out* as an anagram indicator (my thanks to Kate Lawrence for pointing this out). Nevertheless, an inexperienced solver making the transition from simple crosswords, and still lacking competence in the genre-specific language, would, I feel, find the misleading contexts of [17] and [18] similar obstacles to solving the clue.

[6] Or at least it was in January 1995, when the then *Guardian* editor Preston was still in the bad books of the political establishment. The clue is a charade, with much use of crossword jargon: E + S (i.e. quarters = compass points) + say + Ed (= editor).

References

1. Primary sources

i *The Guardian* crossword sample

Publication date	Crossword	Setter	Quick crossword
Saturday, 21 January 1995	20,244	Enigmatist	—
Monday, 23 January 1995	20,245	Crispa	7,719
Tuesday, 24 January 1995	20,246	Orlando	7,720
Wednesday, 25 January 1995	20,247	Gordius	7,721
Thursday, 26 January 1995	20,248	Rufus	7,722
Friday, 27 January 1995	20,249	Shed	7,723

Guardian crosswords are coded in the text as follows: G + number, e.g. G20244 = 21.1.95
Quick crosswords are coded as follows: G + number + Q, e.g. G7719Q = 23.1.95
The setters' pseudonyms refer to the cryptic crossword; *Guardian* quick crosswords are anonymous.

ii Other crosswords referred to in text

Publication date	Source	Crossword	Setter
Friday, 23 December 1994	*Daily Telegraph*	21,440 (T21440)	—
Thursday, 29 December 1994	*The Independent*	2,557 (I2557)	Spurius
Saturday, 31 December 1994	*The Independent*	2,559 (I2559)	Lucifer

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Appendix: Guardian Crossword No. 20,246 (Cryptic clues, solutions & analysis)

#	*Clue (MI in bold)*	*Answer*	*Analysis of FI*	*FI type*	*MI sense rel to target*
a08	**A brave leader** gives region new way of working	Geronimo	region + MO? *anag*	comp anag	super
a09	**Horse replacing another | campanologist**	ringer	—	double MI	syn | syn
a10	**Bill | the magistrate**	beak	—	double MI	syn | syn
a11	**Traders having fits**, finding customer is always wrong?	costumiers	customer is *anag*	anag	cryptic allusion
a12	**Lots** of **chimneys**	stacks	—	double MI	syn | syn? super (mer)?
a14	Parades before eastern **nobleman abroad**	marchese	marches + E	char	super
a15	Villein comes back with female **student in first year**	fresher	serf *rev* + her	comp: rev-char	syn
a17	**Go down** with U-boat team	subside	sub + side	char	syn
a20	Song concerning an **idler**	layabout	lay about	char	syn
a22	**Capital** letters in SAUNAS	Nassau	SAUNAS *anag*	anag	super
a23	**Orderly** sorting out messy attic	systematic	messy attic *anag*	anag	syn
a24	A fuel for **stoves**	Agas	a gas	char	super
a25	**A piece of furniture** for the **office**	bureau	—	double MI	super | syn
a26	**Choice** of English reading	election	E + lection	char	syn
d01	**Father** improved, for example, inside	begetter	e.g. *in* better	c-c	syn
d02	**Some footwear** that's a **hit**	sock	—	double MI	super | syn
d03	Talk about endless **field event**	discus	discuss - s	subtr	super
d04	Study birds about to **eat**	consume	con + emus *rev*	comp: char-rev	syn? super (tropon)?
d05	**Fussy decoration** turned out for university doubles	froufrou	(for *rev* + U) x 2	misc: double-rev	syn? super?
d06	One tax is the **direct opposite**	antithesis	an tithe is	char	syn
d07	**Footballers getting red cards**	hearts	—	double MI	super | super
d13	Informal **wear injured people**	casualties	casual ties	char	syn
d16	Wren or mouse, most **huge**	enormous	Wr-**en** or **mous**-e	hid	syn

d18	**Harmony** in sad piano composition	diapason	sad piano *anag*	anag	super
d19	Good person, say, with a **speech defect**	stutter	St. + utter	char	super
d21	In a run-down area youth-leader found **refuge**	asylum	y *in* a slum	comp: c-c-char	syn
d22	**Anagram in clue round which things may grow**	nuclei	in clue *anag*	anag	syn
d24	**Wine** when it turns	Asti	as + it *rev*	comp: char-rev	super

Abbreviations & Taxonomy of FI types (from Manley 1992)

1	anag	anagram
2	char	charade: assemble words or abbreviations in string to form target
3	rev	reversal: reverse part of FI to produce target
4	c-c	container & contents: insert a word or abbreviation into another to form target
5	subtr	subtractive: take indicated letters away from a word to form target
6	hid	hidden word: target is concealed within words in the FI
7	sound	puns & homophones: no example above, but e.g.: "Snare is why 'Arry can't irrigate 'is garden" [G20245] for 'noose', i.e. "no 'ose"
8	comp	complex: combinations of two or more of the above
9	misc	miscellaneous

LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This paper describes a project what sought to investigate what factors are perceived by students as helpful or detrimental to their language learning. Questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of Modern Language students at the Institute for Applied Language Studies (IALS). In-depth interviews, which focused on the three main factors mentioned in the questionnaires (homework, teaching and learning in a group), were conducted with a much smaller sample. Respondents seemed highly positive about their present classes, especially friendly atmosphere and use of homework, and generally felt that 'teacher knows best'. Negative comments appeared to refer to earlier learning, especially at school.

1. Background

For some years, the authors have worked as teachers, Course Directors and materials writers on the Modern Language Community Courses at the Institute for Applied Language Studies. These are open courses, at all levels, usually two hours per week. The approach to teaching and course/materials design is partly shaped by the general IALS approach and "house style", partly by what each Course Director perceives as appropriate and necessary for the language section. The latter can vary fairly considerably, given the size and history of each section, the prevalence of the language in British school curricula, and the degree of linguistic and cultural "remoteness" of the language to British learners.

Course Directors (and other teachers) get a fair amount of valuable informal feedback from students. On the regular end-of-term questionnaires, we get more specific feedback on course content, class activities, and materials. We felt, though, that all this still did not tell us enough about some cognitive and affective factors on the individual learners' side, such as the learning strategies they might employ, or their attitudes toward language learning (shaped by various positive and negative experiences in the past, e.g. at school). More insight into these factors would reveal more of what makes our learners tick as learners, and this could help us to help them to learn more successfully.

The original idea for this research actually arose from our concern about some typical fossilised learners, who had been studying a language at IALS for 2 or 3 years without making significant progress. As we share Beasley's and Riordan's view that 'the natural processes of evaluation and research which teachers carry out daily' should form the basis for teacher-initiated classroom research (Beasley and Riordan 1981, in Nunan 1990), we felt that an investigation into learning strategies and attitudes would help to tackle this problem. The aim of our research then broadened, taking into consideration the "average" students as well as particular cases. Under 'attitudes' we looked at learner views on certain factors seemingly external to the learning process itself, constituting what Oxford (1990) calls "input", including teacher characteristics, teaching style, methods and activities, learners' reactions to the different techniques.

Considering the above factors as part of the learning process still implies that learning strategies are of great importance. Learning strategies have been used for thousands of years before being formally and systematically studied by researchers (Oxford ibid.). Surely the learners themselves know best what helps them learning. Therefore focussing our attention on the learners seemed the right approach. Wenden and Rubin (1987:3) comment: '[previous studies] do not examine the learners' perception of what they do to learn or to manage their learning. They do not seek to present the process of L2 learning from the learners' viewpoint'. Although there seems to be a common assumption that adult learners' own beliefs and theories regarding foreign language learning have a relevant role in their learning, there is very little research on the subject. Horwitz (1987) has noted that many students come to classes with various preconceived ideas about language learning, but we still do not know very much about the nature of these beliefs. Moreover, it is

usually the teacher who decides what learners will learn, in which order they will learn it and how (Ellis 1985). An investigation into the factors learners perceive as beneficial or detrimental to their language learning could be a small attempt to redress this balance.

2. Objectives

In the original proposal the title was, "Learners' Perceptions of Learning Strategies and Attitudes", with the main aim of "gaining insight into how learners, in their own perception, have learnt an L2 successfully or have failed to do so".

The following were the specific objectives:

a) to find out how learners perceive they have achieved or failed to achieve competence both in any L2 previously, and in a specific L2 during their current experience at IALS

b) to find out which areas of language learning (such as grammar, vocabulary, practising of the skills etc.) learners believe to be important and how they rate this importance both in class time and in their own individual study time outside the classroom

c) to find out what learners consider evidence for their success or lack of success in language learning both in class and in other contexts

After the analysis of the data collected in the questionnaires, we decided it would more appropriate and realistic to modify the main aim to "to gain insight into learners' perceptions of various aspects of their language learning", and to concentrate on the first of the three specific objectives only, i.e. on "finding out what learners perceive as facilitating/inhibiting factors in their language learning" (i.e. factors in the learners themselves and in the learning situation they find).

3. Procedure

The data were collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews and/or transcribed recordings.

A questionnaire with two open-ended questions was produced, and piloted amongst summer students of various languages and then used with larger numbers in the Autumn Term. (See Appendix 1).

In question 1, the students were not asked to distinguish between IALS and pre-IALS learning experiences - in fact, we found that most respondents referred to their experience at IALS. Although we had hoped to gain some insight into the difference between their current and previous language learning, we wanted to avoid a leading question hinting at a "before" and "after" effect. But in fact some of the pre-IALS learning experiences students did refer to were experiences at school, most of them unpleasant. We had also expected that in talking about helping and hindering factors students would refer in some way to their learning strategies, but there was no mention of them.

In question 2, which was very open, we found that the respondents were reporting on success/lack of success in a mixture of classroom and real life situations, not real-life situations only, as we had expected.

Considering how interesting the comments on the pilot questionnaire had been, it seemed worthwhile to go ahead and distribute the same questionnaire to larger numbers of students in Term 1, October 1993. We got responses from about 120 students, of Italian (38) and German (36) and also Spanish (31) and French (15). Most of them offered praise, ranging from whole-hearted to faint, quite a few of them offering constructive suggestions/criticism and also some remarks about their personal circumstances.

The responses probably said more about the students' perceptions of themselves being taught than about their perceptions of their own learning. Also, the vast majority of comments were concerned with the affective side of the learning experience rather than with the cognitive or skills side. The importance of this

side is probably often undervalued, especially with adult learners. As Oxford emphasises (1990: 140) '[the affective domain] spreads out like a fine-spun net, encompassing such concepts as self-esteem, attitudes, motivation, anxiety, culture-shock, inhibition, risk-taking and tolerance for ambiguity. The affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure.'

We organised the data from the questionnaires into categories and subcategories (see Appendix 2.1, 2.2), and noted how frequently these points had been mentioned.

Several factors, interestingly enough, were mentioned as helping as well as hindering, e.g. almost exclusive use of target language in class, pair/group work, learning in a group, choice of topics, correction, artificiality of the classroom situation.

Out of the categories derived from the questionnaires, a grid for the interviews emerged: the questions would refer to the most frequently mentioned factors and also to others that we thought potentially interesting (see Appendix 3). The grid provided us with a semi-structured frame which we believed would leave the interviewees with more control over the course of the interview. This, as Nunan (1992) points out, would also increase the degree of flexibility for the interviewers. The grid was to be filled in during and immediately after the interview, and each interview was to be tape-recorded for reference later on and as a source for quotations.

We had taught or were teaching most of the interviewees at some point in the past or at the time of the interviews but were now talking to them as researchers - this meant that we appeared to the interviewees in a double role. As Littlejohn (1993) suggests: 'Try to define exactly how the respondents see you, the researcher, and what it is that you are up to' and '[think] about how this might affect what the respondent says'. In our case, we anticipated that some respondents would be cautious in answering the questions about teaching.

Between the three of us, we conducted and tape-recorded 20 interviews with students of Italian and German at various levels, all with English as first language. All had previously filled in a questionnaire and indicated that they were happy to be interviewed. The actual selection of interviewees was based partly on particularly interesting responses in the questionnaires which seemed worth following up, and partly on the availability of students. The sample of 20 was fairly representative of the Institute's Modern Languages Students, as far as sex, age and social background are concerned (mostly professional, ages 20 to 60+). Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, plus preparation and note taking afterwards, which meant that the time spent on each interview was about one hour.

We then listened to the tapes and took notes and/or transcribed quotes in order to enter the comments into a database. We each analysed one main section of the interview. The findings will be described in the next section.

4. Findings

4.1 Homework

In the questionnaires homework was mentioned 35 times as a helping factor (and incidentally 6 times as hindering through its absence, being too mechanical or returned too late) rating among the factors with the highest score. This was somewhat surprising as, from our experience in class, the number of students regularly doing their homework did not seem to be so high. We therefore decided to include it among the topics for the interviews, hoping to gain more insights.

Do you do it regularly?

The answers to this question were overwhelmingly positive. Only one person answered *"yes, but not always the one I am given"*. Asked for reasons, most students seemed to think that it was beneficial: *"it gives discipline"*, *" it is a good way of learning"*, *"it stops you from going back"*, *"it is good for consolidation"*. A quarter of the interviewees mentioned one form or another of peer pressure: *"it is embarrassing if you do*

not do it", "I did not want to be shamed", "it is necessary to keep up with the class". Several students told us that they did it because they enjoyed it *"I enjoy it, it's natural to me".* The fact that homework was set regularly was mentioned several times as *"a plus for courses at IALS".*

Should homework be used as a preparation for the next lesson?

Here the response was more mixed with a slight predominance of positive answers, particularly with regard to vocabulary: *"it could be an incentive", "it would give you something to focus on in class", "I would like to prepare a topic in advance".* Many students realised that it probably would not be very realistic: *"somebody may not do it and would not attend the class".* Many preferred homework to be used for revision and reinforcement and among the negative answers someone said: *"Demands at work do not always allow for homework to be done; we would rebel!"*

Should homework be corrected individually or collectively?

Out of 20 students, 14 replied *"both".* Several answers indicated that class correction was good as one learned from others' mistakes/answers: *"Things come out in class that would never come out if corrected individually"* or *"Repetition from class correction is good"* or *"One is forced to go over the homework and more comes out of it".* However one student admitted *"I never thought I would be so childishly pleased if someone wrote 'gut' on my homework".*

What kind of feedback would you like to get?

Most answers seemed to interpret feedback narrowly as meaning only correction, and expectations from students were quite low: most seemed to be happy with *"just correction"*; it has to be taken into account that feedback takes place formally during the class and informally at other times. *"Highlighting of persistent errors", " tips to avoid clumsiness"* were among the comments.

Does homework play a role in encouraging or discouraging you?

Answers to this question were suspiciously unanimous in their "positiveness", only one person admitting *"lots of mistakes get me down"* (comments heard in class when giving back homework are decidedly more in line with this remark). Other comments were *"errors are corrected, which does not always happen in class", "aiming at accuracy as opposed to communicating in class", "it is a vital indicator whether you are learning".* Pleasure was mentioned again: *"I quite enjoy doing it because often you discover things other than homework".*

Which kind of homework do you find more beneficial? (grammar exercises, free/guided writing, reading)

Virtually everybody stressed the need for homework to be in a written form: *"it should be written because you take more care", "anything involving writing because it reinforces and makes it stick".* The majority of the students studying Italian expressed a marked preference for free writing while none of those studying German mentioned it: this could be due to the fact that the level was generally slightly higher among the students of Italian or perhaps it is simply that emulating Goethe is perceived as too ambitious while Dante feels more within reach!

What would help you to do it more regularly or, how could it be more beneficial?

As, to our surprise, all the students interviewed had declared that they did their homework regularly, the question proved to be redundant. However, there were demands for homework to be *"more testing", " more varied and more stimulating".* Several people also expressed the need to make it *"more essential that homework is done".*

Conclusions

Among the various institutions that offer Language courses to adults in Edinburgh, IALS stands out because homework is set regularly. Nonetheless, if asked whether we thought that homework played an important role in the learning process of our students before embarking on this project, we would have probably given a negative answer with confidence. From the answers we got both from the questionnaires and the interviews it is clear that we underestimated the importance of homework for our students. Most students asked for both individual and collective correction: on the one hand students seem to need a public recognition of their efforts, on the other hand it seems to be well integrated in their learning process. Another element that emerged from this investigation is the opposition of fluency (in the class) to accuracy (for homework). Homework has to be in a written form; it is seen by all our students as something permanent to contrast with the transient oral fluency of their efforts in class. It is also a written record of progress and it provides the students with the necessary continuity between classes.

4.2 Teaching

In this analysis of the answers to the five questions concerning teaching, two general considerations need to be borne in mind. Firstly, almost all the answers in this section of the interview referred to individual teachers rather than teaching behaviour. Secondly, the answers referred to students' experience of teachers at IALS or at school. It seems that in general positive points related largely to present experience at IALS while negative ones related largely to traditional school experience.

How do you think a teacher could help you best?

Prompts given were: setting priority, feedback, correction, vitality/enthusiasm, explanations. Various answers referred to the prompts (namely correction, priorities, vitality). As far as correction is concerned, most answers referred to its importance, (which was also an evident point made about homework) with comments like "*correction is vital / correction is imperative for gauging how much we have learnt / lots of correction is good and necessary*". But some answers referred to interruptions as well: "*The teacher does not interrupt and correct at the end of your speech*".

There seemed also to be a variety of references to the importance of having a native speaker as a teacher for cultural input, particularly "*It is extremely important to learn about German mentality*".

Two more points were made about the helpful teacher: must be interested and must not be sarcastic. These comments seemed to refer to past experiences of teachers. The word "*sarcastic*" in particular has been used later on as well to define less helpful behaviour.

Is the continuity of the teacher important?

To this question we were expecting a general agreement on "yes", given our experience of students not wanting to change their teacher year after year. What we actually found were 11 positive answers, 5 negative and 4 negative/positive.

In most cases a distinction was made according to different situations: according to level (No for Beginners / Yes for Advanced), quality of teaching, or depending on frequency of changes (same teacher for one term/year).

Why is the continuity of the teacher important ?

Various reasons given here, such as 'teacher knows students' ("*The teacher understands the mistakes you keep making and gives you advice about them*"/"*The teacher gets to know you and what standard you are at*"), 'students know teacher' ("*... you tune into her/his way of speaking*"), safety/confidence and 'relationship/group' ("*Classes at IALS have continuity and are bonded with the teacher. The group works better.*"), are clearly interrelated. They all refer to the group dynamics and seem to suggest a vision of the class as a friendly group of people. This is exactly what we would have expected from the questionnaires.

Some students mentioned the positive aspects of changing the teacher : *"different accents"*, *"different personality"*, *"different way of teaching"*. To these students, all difference seems to be felt as good: *"... variety of personalities and accents are nice: you are not going to speak to one person all the time!"* / *"It seems strange to learn your whole language from one person."*.

Analysing these results it looks as if there were two contrasting tendencies: on the one hand your teacher loves you and is the best you can get but, on the other hand, any changes in the way of teaching, personality and accent are welcome. In general the interviewees who were against the idea of changing teacher had stronger feelings than the ones who did not object to it.

How learner-centred do you think the lesson should be?

Prompts given were: setting the pace, interacting with students, deciding about activities. For many people the question was too specific and formulated in an unfamiliar language and therefore it was very difficult to answer. This may account for the fairly high number of people who did not answer.

The majority of students said that the class should be *"teacher centred"* and seem to think that *"the teacher knows best"*, as one of them put it. However many of the interviewees tried to justify themselves saying that they were used to old teaching styles or they were old themselves and therefore not familiar with "modern" teaching. It seems as if all of them know that "democracy in the classroom" is a popular issue, but they cannot agree with it and they almost feel guilty for that *"I am an old-fashioned type, if I come here to learn then it is the teacher that should decide."*.

Three people said that that it is *"good as it is"* and their answers seemed somehow to convey the idea that the lesson is teacher-centred. However, it is interesting that one student mentioned that it should be *"class centred"*. Only one person suggested that the class should be a *"partnership teacher-student"*, and this seemed to be a good balance, the real "democracy".

What sort of teaching behaviour do you see as not helpful?

This question is closely related to the first of this set of questions. Some of the points mentioned by the students like *"correction"* and *"sarcastic"* had already been mentioned but, quite interestingly, not always by the same people.

We had expected here a few examples of bad teaching behaviour. These are some of the points that contribute to the picture of a bad teacher: *"A teacher that does not pay attention equally to students"*, or is *"too timid"* and *"does not tell students to shut up"*, who has *"no sense of humour"*, who is *"disorganised"* and one who is *"impatient"* or *"bored"*. And finally: *"A teacher who is deadly boring, that is the worst"*.

It must be underlined that the interviewees seemed to refer mostly to their school experience when describing their image of a non-helpful teacher. This seems to be revealed by comments such as *"a teacher who has pet students and ignores the rest"* or *"a teacher who has a plan and follows it regardless"*. The same person mentioned as well *"useless grammar* and *learning poems"*. We might be wrong, but we associate the concepts of pet students and learning poems with traditional school experiences.

Conclusions

Students seem to believe that teachers at IALS are able to plan and organise the lessons in the best possible way and seem to be happy to leave to the teacher the amount of freedom/democracy she/he wants to employ.

Most of the students seem to have a general idea about "traditional" school methods versus "modern" IALS methods. But while they seem to have strong personal ideas about "traditional" they do not elaborate on the positive aspects of "modern". Here again they seem to trust IALS teaching policy.

The attitudes regarding the continuity of the teacher show a fair amount of awareness of the gains and drawbacks of changing the teacher. Again a high degree of trust is shown here, but it seems to be more founded. Students' acceptance that changing the teacher can imply positive effects was somewhat surprising.

4.3 Learning in a group

This set of questions explored how students felt about learning in what we see as a fairly stable and relaxed group, as opposed to learning in a 1:1 situation or in naturalistic surroundings, or to learning in a group with little or no choice about it (e.g. at school!)

The first 6 items were presented to students as pairs of opposites, representing the two ends of a continuum, or the "two sides of the coin"(i.e. positive and negative sides of the same factor). Students were asked where they thought they fitted in along this continuum, or which aspect they thought more relevant.

To find out what students think about speaking to other students as a central activity in the classroom, we asked them which of the following two aspects is more relevant for them: ***Learning from each other*** or ***picking up mistakes from one another.***

Very positive comments were made overall; about 3/4 of learners stated explicitly how they profit by learning from the other students - it could mean that they increase their confidence by practising situations with classmates, or that they can practise the vital ability to *"pick up what the other person is saying"*. This was more or less what we had expected.

More surprising for us was the philosophical attitude towards mistakes. Only two students expressed worries about making mistakes: *"if too many working in a group and not enough correction"*. Most other interviewees did not seem very concerned; on the contrary, learners commented that *"you have to make mistakes in order to get used to making mistakes in real life"*, or *"even Germans do not speak perfect German!"*. Several students implied that they were not so worried because they were sure that mistakes would either self-correct later on (*"you usually know when you have made a mistake"*), or that they would be corrected fairly quickly either by the teacher or by fellow-students.

Overcoming fears and inhibitions or ***too much familiarity*** were the two opposites related to learning in the set-up of a stable, friendly group.

Not very surprisingly for us, the message here is very clear: the friendlier the better, and this fits in with the findings from the previous question about learning from one another. Students commented in various ways on how the friendliness in the group helps them to*"find their feet"* initially (i.e. makes them feel sufficiently at ease to start speaking out in class), and later on helps them to contribute more or more meaningfully: *"if you get on with people, it reduces stress levels"*.

Nobody felt they had encountered excessive familiarity, although some learners speculated how too much familiarity might hinder their learning, for example they might *"slack off"* after a while as far as class attendance or homework are concerned, or show *"less commitment"* in class than they would in a *"less comfortable environment"*.

Implicitly or explicitly, most students see it as the teacher's responsibility to establish the atmosphere of friendliness initially but also to make sure it does not get excessive as time goes on.

Peer pressure to keep up or ***mutual support*** were the two opposites we asked students to think about in relation to the group making progress together.

Here the picture is very mixed: for each side of the factor looked at separately, about half of the students state that it is an important and/or helpful factor. Opinions range from the recognition that some peer pressure is necessary: *"on your own, you do not have to learn - in class, if you do not know the answers, you look foolish and it is a waste of time"* to a perhaps slightly idealised view of the class as mutually supportive

group without performance pressures: *"the class is not competitive, as each person has strengths and weaknesses"*.

On the other hand, peer pressure can be felt as rather intimidating, as this remark shows: *"I was initially terrified. I always thought that everybody else was much better than I was. Then I gradually discovered I did know quite a lot"*.

One fifth of respondents stated explicitly that both sides are necessary and important for their learning, even though the peer pressure is not always seen as altogether positive. One comment on the peer pressure side is *"I need this more negative side in order to make me do some work"*. One student said that group support is important but that *"it is difficult to maintain enthusiasm without some sort of examination"*, and for him, having to *"talk in a group every week is like an exam where you have to perform"*. Another learner summarised the importance of both aspects like this: *"Friendly rivalry is good!"*.

We were quite surprised to see how much more students' opinions divide on this point than on other points. The language used to describe the two sides is rather significant. Expressions used for the supportive (the positive) side include *"voluntary/friendly/not competitive"*, whereas the peer pressure side (the more mixed or even negative side) is described as *"rivalry/performing/racing ahead/pressure/keeping up/letting down"*.

Students' personalities and conditioning seem to come in here more than with other questions. Comparing the answers from female and male respondents in detail could be rather intriguing. Or, it could be interesting to look again at each learner's specific motivation for taking the course and to relate the answer to that.

Classroom pace is usually geared to the average student.

Is this a problem for you?

Answers were very mixed - the implicit message is: who is this phantom "average student" anyway?

By linking the pace to factors like different motivations, learning speeds, group sizes, participants' ages and class levels, students seemed to be trying to define that elusive "average student". One learner commented the if the pace is not geared to the average student then *"there is something wrong"*; another asked for the virtually impossible, namely that the pace *"should be geared to everybody"*!

Three respondents each said they had felt the pace had been either too slow for them *"slow people can be a problem"* or rather brisk *"The teacher moves us on quickly because we need to be moved on quickly"*.

Only two respondents appeared not particularly concerned about fast or slow pace *"whether the topic interests me is more important"* and *"different weaknesses and strengths in different language areas even this out"*.

Is the class a social occasion for you?

This should perhaps have been put in a different way or defined more clearly, perhaps adding "... as well as an occasion for learning". Students seemed to understand social occasion here as a fixed occasion on a particular weekday when they go and meet this friendly, stable group of people who share a common aim and who have a lot of fun together.

The answers were more mixed than we would have thought and also revealed some fairly strong negative feelings - somewhat surprising since these learners did make the choice to learn in this kind of group after all.

Just under half of the respondents saw the class as a social occasion in this sense, explicitly or implicitly helpful to their learning: *"I like other people"* or *"I enjoy people ... the enjoyment helps the learning"*. One student said she has made good friends who she now regularly sees outside the class - this seems to be an exception rather than the norm, though.

On the other hand, again just under half of the learners said that this social side is not or should not be the most important factor: *"No! I am here for learning"*, *"I do not need a social fix"*, *"I can see the social bit interfering with the learning"*. Some students clearly have very much their own agenda, the determination to learn (one student calls it her *"selfish purpose"*), regardless of the dynamics in the group. Others might perhaps be reluctant to admit that the social side is important to them because they do not want to give the impression that they are short of social contacts.

Would the lack of group continuity be a problem for you?

It is worth recalling here that in Modern Languages classes, we only see our students for 2 hours a week over 9 - 12 weeks. Group continuity was understood here as a relatively stable group over at least 2 terms or the whole year.

Generally, comments centre on the theme of getting on with the group helping learning, and most students appear to value group continuity. More specifically, more than half of respondents explicitly stated why it is important and helpful, explaining that *"there is more natural conversational feeling"*, or *"you talk more freely and get away from the bland conversation, and you talk about things you might actually want to talk about"*. Other reasons given are: it is more relaxed/ less inhibited/one gets *"familiar with everybody else's learning habits and speed"*. Another reason was that too much change is unsettling: *"newcomers change the balance in the group"* and *"existing group members need to tune in to new ones"*.

But learners seemed to be well aware of possible drawbacks of a stable group over a longer period, as some of the qualified yes-answers and some of the negative comments (about a third of the respondents) showed. Students appreciated, for example, that *"newcomers to the group might feel like outsiders"* or that new/different people in the class could be more stimulating and interesting *"I need to talk to different people"*.

Other learners pointed out that although group continuity is nice, it is not so important after the beginner stage or that it is in fact not crucial to their own learning progress *"lack of group continuity would not have hindered learning progress seriously - at the age I am, I am very used to taking people as I find them and I am convinced that what I'm doing is what I want to do"*. Again, it seems that some students have a very clear idea of their own learning agenda.

Conclusions

Obviously, it was the interviewees' own choice in the first place to learn in a fairly stable and friendly group of well-motivated fellow-learners - and our expectation of many positive comments about this kind of learning set-up was certainly fulfilled.

What are the more specific messages? Firstly, even if it is stating the obvious, it is crucial that teachers should continue to establish and encourage the much-appreciated supportive friendliness and non-threatening, relaxed atmosphere which is so obviously seen as an asset at IALS courses. This is a very important point to make during the induction and development sessions for new teachers.

Secondly, in spite of this strong appreciation of the friendliness of the group, quite a few of the interviewees see the social side and the learning side quite clearly as two different factors. They seem to imply that however enjoyable the social interaction in the group might be, learning progress is more important or would happen regardless of the social side. This is a reminder perhaps for the teacher not to assume automatically that just because the group is obviously getting on very well, it means each and every individual is satisfied with their learning progress.

5. General conclusions

The questionnaires and especially the interviews give a complex, if rather impressionistic, picture of how a group of Modern Languages students see the effect of various factors on their language learning. Although the sample of interviewees was small, the picture is still valuable since the cross-section of students is fairly

representative of the typical IALS Modern Languages population. A certain amount of generalisation from these data should be possible.

The interviews were not only a means of gathering data, but turned out to be enlightening and enriching for both sides: the students welcomed the chance to reflect on and talk about their own learning (as opposed to course evaluation). Perhaps they should be given more opportunities in the future to repeat this experience.

The usefulness of the interviews could also be seen as part of a process of raising students' consciousness about teaching and learning issues, therefore improving their language learning. Rubin (1987: 16) writes: 'It is assumed that making learning decisions conscious can lead both poor and better learners to [...] better learning.'

The teachers/researchers, apart from seeing new aspects of the students' learning processes, were reminded of how the students might feel in the language classroom, and were given an opportunity to reflect on some aspects of teaching behaviour/style.

What are the main insights gained? Above all, a picture emerged of what is happening to these adult, usually well-educated and well-motivated students on the affective side in the languuge classroom and why it might be happening. There is a wide range of different feelings/attitudes from inhibition/intimidation to confidence/safety, from a more self-centred/"selfish" to a sociable/mutually supportive approach, from feeling discouraged to feeling encouraged. The individual's feelings of self-worth come in here, too, although referred to only implicitly.

Learning in a group is seen on the whole as a positive, rewarding and effective way of learning, although students have also stated fairly frankly its inevitable drawbacks and limitations.

Students seem to have an unshakeable faith in their teacher's ability to organise and direct their learning. They seem to be happy to delegate most of the decisions about their language learning to the teacher and, although our data might be affected by the students' desire to please, seem satisfied with their teacher's competence.

Homework seems to be the link between collective effort produced in the class and individual effort. Students clearly perceive this unity as important, as they consider homework as a way of checking their progress and as yet another way of learning.

6. Future developments

This study has convinced us that there are some useful practical changes to our courses that could be implemented quite easily.

Homework should be integrated even more into the syllabus. Different kinds of homework could be given, perhaps using a variety of skills and different media besides the written homework, which was widely seen as the most beneficial.

For feedback on our teaching and as an alternative to our standard end-of-course evaluation questionnaire, it might be useful to offer the opportunity for an informal talk between student and course director. Another possibility would be to introduce a Course Director's "surgery" when students can come and talk about the course in general.

On a more theoretical level, each of the three factors (homework, teaching, learning in a group) is interesting enough in its own right to deserve to be investigated further, with a larger sample of students.

Here are some possible developments:

Large samples of students could be given different types of homework and asked to evaluate them according to effectiveness, pleasure, usefulness. The resulting data could help to develop homework materials more systematically.

Further investigation into effective ways of teaching could be carried out. This could include finding out more about past language-learning experiences, but should mainly concentrate on which aspects of teaching at IALS are perceived as helpful.

The individual students' motivations could be investigated at the start and throughout the course. Changes in motivation and how these affect the attitude to group learning could be followed up.

One could investigate, perhaps by survey of a large and representative sample of the student population, aspects of the skills side and cognitive side of their learning, in order to get a clearer picture of the "mental landscape" of our learners.

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APPENDIX 1 *Questionnaire*

(retyped and reduced)

As teachers of Modern Languages in the Institute, we are interested in what makes learning languages easier or more difficult, and we are planning a small study on this. As a first stage, we are asking some students to answer the following questions.

1 - ***What do you think have been helping or hindering influences in learning a language in a formal situation (e.g. a course)?***

helping factors

hindering factors

Can you give a few examples of situations in which you thought your language learning had been successful or unsuccessful?

success

lack of success

Thank you!

Giulia Dawson
Elisabeth McCulloch
Stella Peyronel

APPENDIX 2.1
HINDERING FACTORS

• *TL used almost exclusively in class*	instructions
	explanations
	vocab
	audio-visual
	not in social class situations like coffee break
• *No need/pressure to communicate in TL*	
• *Class size*	too small
	too large
	increases fears/inhibitions
	limited individual attention
• *Infrequency of class*	
• *Formal learning situation does not overcome learning plateau*	
• *Bad memories of "traditional" language teaching*	
• *"Formal" teaching methods*	
• *Audio-visual materials*	poor sound quality
	too difficult
	not available for home use
	not used often enough
	poorly chosen
• *Pace*	geared to "average" student rather than individual
	to slow can mean unproductive (e.g. discussions)
	too fast
• *Lack of accompanying worksheets*	vocab. lists (with Eng)
	grammar
	in English
• *Lack of textbook*	
• *Bad textbook*	
• *Lack of exposure to / use of TL outside classroom*	
• *Not enough grammar taught*	
• *Limited speaking practice in class*	
• *Too tired too pay enough attention in evening classes*	
• *Classroom activities*	devoid of real content
	too difficult
	rules too difficult (games)
• *Topics*	not providing scope for discussion
	not very relevant
	too much time spent on one topic
	no current affairs
	not enough time spent on one topic
	random choice
• *Pair/group work*	lack of pair work
	bad partner
	errors ignored/not corrected
	less effort made
	not done at all
	group too big
• *Not enough written work/spelling*	
• *Wrong level of class*	
• *Classroom situation is artificial (Teacher understands better than natives)*	
• *Problems with correction*	not enough given
	lack of praise/positive encouragement
	too much pronunciation correction
• *Teacher is not helpful*	speaks too fast
	unsympathetic
	not encouraging use of TL at coffee break
• *Bad memory for vocabulary*	
• *Lack of course outline*	lack of opportunity to prepare for next topic
	no help given for realistic achievement targets

* ***Homework***	not enough returned too late tasks too mechanical
* ***Learning situation in a group***	too much familiarity not enough correct TL input pressure to keep up with weekly progress of group dominant individuals can create reluctance to speak picking up from each others' mistakes fears/inhibitions not sufficiently stretched

* ***Lack of time/pressure to do work outside the classroom***
* ***Lack of choice over course content***
* ***Wide range of abilities in one class***
* ***Better students in the class have an off-putting effect***
* ***Linguistic objectives of activity not clear***
* ***Physical factors such as classroom facilities***
* ***Too much/detailed grammar***
* ***Not enough vocabulary taught***
* ***Too much emphasis on speaking***
* ***Worse students in the class have an off-putting effect***
* ***Course content*** — no continuity; geared to average student
* ***Lack of teacher's continuity***
* ***Lack of fun***
* ***Lack of group continuity***
* ***Lack of testing/evaluation/assessment***
* ***Lack of motivation***
* ***Lack of revision***
* ***Lack of controlled practice***
* ***Teacher not native speaker***

APPENDIX 2.2
HELPING FACTORS

- ***Homework***
- ***Similar abilities within the class***
- ***Safety of the classroom situation***
- ***Almost exclusive use of TL***
- ***Teacher is helpful***
  - setting priorities
  - with grammar
  - with cultural questions
  - has drive/enthusiasm
  - feedback
- ***Smallish group***
  - individual attention
  - pressure to participate
  - overcomes fears/inhibitions
- ***Linguistic objectives clearly set out***
- ***Audio-visual aids***
- ***Using the TL with native speakers***
- ***Relaxed/informal atmosphere***
- ***Emphasis on speaking/listening***
  - rather than writing
  - rather than grammar
- ***Accompanying worksheets***
- ***Native speaker as T***
- ***Using the language lab***
- ***Correction***
  - grammar
  - pronunciation
- ***Commitment to regular work by attending a class***
- ***Role play***
- ***Course pitched at right level***
- ***Previous language learning experience***
- ***Cultural input***
- ***Familiarity with grammar categories/sound grammar base***
- ***Exposure to/use of TL outside the classroom***
- ***Varied/well-designed activities***
- ***Revision/repetition***
- ***Understanding grammar helps to build up the Language***
- ***Relevance of topics***
  - current affairs
  - everyday situations
  - business-related
- ***Learning situation in a group***
  - pair work
  - learning from each other
  - mutual support
  - fun/enthusiasm/motivation
  - overcome fears/inhibitions
  - peer pressure
  - mixed ages/backgrounds
  - social event
- ***Unpredictability of classroom events***
- ***Real/relevant use of Language in class***
- ***Building up vocab. round a topic***
- ***Phonetics***
- ***Plenty of discussions***
- ***Intensive course***
- ***Pace***
- ***Break***
- ***Motivation***
- ***Controlled practice***
- ***Textbook***
- ***Course outline***
- ***Testing/exam/assessment***
- ***Words written down***
- ***Games***

APPENDIX 3
Interview schedule (skeleton)

Name
Occupation
Mother tongue
Motivation for IALS course
Other languages
Details of other courses

Sex
Age
Language (studied at IALS)
How long for
Motivation

HOMEWORK

- Do you do it regularly? Y / N
- Why?
- Should homework be used as preparation for next lesson?
- Should homework cover aspects not dealt with in the classroom?
- Should it be corrected individually or collectively?
- What kind of feedback would you like to get?
- Does homework play a role in encouraging or discouraging you?
- Which kind of homework do you find more beneficial?
(grammar exercises, free/guided writing, reading)
- What would help you to do it more regularly *or*
- How could it be more beneficial?

- Do you look for other opportunities to use the language?
- Would you like to have some tapes?

TEACHING

- How do you think a teacher could help you best?
(cultural input, setting priority, feedback, correction, vitality/enthusiasm, explanations)
- Is the continuity of the teacher important? Y / N
- Why?
- How much learner centred do you think the lesson should be?
(setting the pace, interacting with students, deciding about activities)
- What sort of teaching behaviour do you see as not helpful?

LEARNING IN A GROUP

- What would your position be?
(learning from each other/picking up mistakes
overcome fears-inhibitions/too much familiarity
peer pressure to keep up/mutual support
pace geared to average students (is it a problem?)
social occasion (is it one for you?)
mixed backgrounds (do you think is positive?))
what would be the ideal percentage of pair/group work?
- Would the lack of group continuity be a problem for you?
- In which situations do you think that the drawbacks of using exclusively the target language outweigh the benefits? (time constraints, clarity, focusing)

Safety and artificiality have been mentioned about the classroom situation

- Why would you say it is safe?
- Why would you say it is artificial?

JAPANESE LEARNERS IN SPEAKING CLASSES

Eileen Dwyer and Anne Heller-Murphy (IALS)

Abstract

This project was undertaken to investigate possible causes of and solutions to the reticence of many of the Japanese students attending General English courses at the Institute for Applied Language Studies of the University of Edinburgh. The issue was considered important because of the suspected effect of this reticence not only on the rate of learning and improvement of the Japanese students themselves, but also on the dynamics of the multi-national classes which they attend. Information was gathered in extensive guided interviews over two years. Results suggest that certain socio-cultural factors are significant causes of reticence, and that - possibly as a result of these factors - activities involving an element of duty to others may encourage Japanese learners to speak. We also speculate, however, that problems may be over-estimated as a result of teachers' anxiety about their role.

1. Introduction

The exploratory investigation reported here was prompted by concern among staff at the Institute for Applied Language Studies (IALS) that their Japanese students were too silent in class. The two researchers have worked at IALS for a number of years both as teachers and directors of courses involving Japanese students. The Japanese students who come to IALS, apart from those who come on short summer courses, stay at least three months, many as long as a year, we had observed that in a number of cases the students, while diligent, seemed unable or unwilling - or perhaps both - to speak in class. How they fared outside of the classroom was less clear, but it was their silence in the classroom that raised concerns, especially in those classes called 'Fluency' (now renamed 'Speaking') in the General English programme, which are attended by all of the Japanese students enrolled at the Institute during the period October to June. Some of then are enrolled full-time on General English, others are on a one-semester programme as part of their studies at a Japanese university and attend only Speaking classes in the General English programme. These classes are 5 hours of a 20-hour-per-week course. A few students had themselves voiced dissatisfaction - or frustration - (either through routine end-of-course questionnaires or anecdotally) at their own perceived lack of progress in speaking.

We were both concerned about the Japanese students themselves, and about the possible effect of their lesser participation on other students (from Europe, South America, East Asia and Arab countries).

We therefore decided to explore the attitudes of the Japanese learners themselves to the kind of activities/tasks they are asked to participate in in Speaking classes, in particular whether they have any marked preferences/dislikes which might inform our teaching to the increased satisfaction of themselves, other students, and teachers.

2. Selective literature review

The nature of English teaching in the Japanese public education system is indicated in works such as Hayes (1979) and Hino (1988) (whose account is corroborated by students at and visiting professors to IALS). Students in English classes are rarely called on to speak. The guidelines of the Ministry of Education quoted in Hayes (op.cit.: 165) state that 'All students at the beginning of their middle school years shall be familiarized with the phonology of a foreign language: the basic language skills to be taught are hearing and speaking'. However, the senior high schools and universities control their own entrance examinations, and because the English part of the entrance exam is usually grammar/translation, grammar/translation is what the schools usually teach (Hayes, op.cit.: 171). The *yakudoku* system of language learning requires the word-for-word translation of an L2 text from L2 to L1, followed by the rearrangement of the word-for-word L1 translation into appropriate L1 word order (Hino:46). The dominance of this traditional system in foreign language learning in Japan is often identified with the goal of studying English itself (op.cit.:47). It is further

the case that the teachers, in both schools and universities, may themselves be untrained to meet the goals of the ministry.

Speaking English may not be a necessary skill for many people in Japan, so the grammar-translation method may be suitable for the compulsory teaching of English as an academic subject (and it is almost universally compulsory (Hayes, op.cit.:365)). As IALS staff, however, we have so far seen our task as helping those Japanese students who have come here, and our assumption has been that, whatever their past experiences, they want to talk here. Students when they arrive here from the Japanese system may often know a great deal *about* English - if they are to become successful speakers, they need both to activate that passive knowledge and acquire the appropriate socio-linguistic rules to mould it (Ellis 1991).

The importance of the socio-pragmatic has been discussed in many articles, of which only a few will be dealt with here. Okushi (1990:69) claims, for example, that in Japan one avoids self-praise by rejecting or contradicting compliments; in the US or the UK, they may be accepted. Further, if societal rules in Japan dictate that it is socially correct to defer to others in conversation, neither seizing the initiative nor interrupting, then it would be unrealistic to expect students to overcome such behaviour without explicit training. If we fail to teach interactional/social rules to our Japanese students, and they then remain silent in class, the fault is surely ours, not theirs. It must also be borne in mind that Japanese students are unlikely to have been exposed to English spoken at conversational native-speaker speed or to have heard other L2 users. If they do not speak, it may be that they do not understand, not that they are unwilling (Maher 1984:48). Powney et al. (1995) conclude that the Japanese schoolchildren they observed speaking very little in Lothian Region schools in Scotland appeared to be in a transitional phase where listening and observing were more important to them than speaking.

A further difficulty facing Japanese students in multi-lingual classes is that, as Berwick (1975: 284) states they are "...not normally exposed to the fairly aggressive 'truth seeking exchanges' characteristic of the American secondary and college classroom" - and characteristic also of classroom exchanges of some of the students whom the Japanese encounter in a classroom here. The 'rigid and demoralizing learning situation in their high-school years' (Kobayashi et al. 1992: 8) may have a lasting negative effect on their classroom behaviour. 'The teacher, the text book, the goal of passing entrance exams were the determinants of methodology' (op.cit.). 'The Japanese education system does not seem to value independence nor assign creative or imaginative tasks.....students are expected to be passive.' (Hyland 1993: 73).

The learners' problems addressed in our research may also be seen as fitting largely within the area of cross-cultural learning styles. There is a large body of research in this area, of which O'Brien (1985) and Sato (1986) are especially worthy of mention. We quote from these in the **Suggestions** section below. A recent survey of the field, published after our research was completed, is Oxford and Anderson (1995). They note that Japanese students 'want to avoid embarrassment and maintain privacy' (p.207); '...though reflective themselves, often want rapid and constant correction from the teacher and do not feel comfortable with multiple correct answers' (p.208); '...dislike ...overt displays of opinions or emotions...' (Harshberger et al., quoted in Oxford and Anderson: 208); '...are often quiet, shy and reticent in language classrooms... may appear to be indecisive.' (Cheung, quoted in Oxford and Anderson:209).

3. The nature of the investigation

The investigation was carried out in two phases. First a preliminary informal questionnaire was distributed to Japanese students at IALS to identify issues to be raised in the subsequent investigation. Six of these students then also discussed their experiences at IALS informally in Japanese with a Japanese colleague who subsequently reported what they had said to us in English. For reasons of space, this preliminary study is reported here below only very briefly.

- The majority of the students said they had hardly spoken English and hardly heard spoken English before they came here in spite of years of formal study of English, although this was not necessarily a source of dissatisfaction to them.

- There seemed to be no marked preference for mono- or multi-lingual classes.

- Embarrassment seemed to be a key inhibiting factor, in both mono- and multi-lingual classes. 'Teacher will find mistakes...' 'I have no confidence...' 'I'm afraid other Japanese will laugh at me later...' 'Other people in the class (non-Japanese) don't understand me...' 'I sometimes say something not the point'

- Japanese social/cultural behavioural norms were a limiting factor in an English-speaking environment (e.g. deference to others, a desire not to prevent another from speaking). 'Among Japanese students it is very rude to speak to show how much you know, or how much you can speak. In Japanese culture, consider[ing] others is a virtue'.

We decided that the main phase of the investigation (Phase 2) should involve semi-structured interviews with 20 Japanese students enrolled at IALS, to ask them their opinions about the classroom activities used at the Institute to promote speaking, and about those other factors - linguistic or extra-linguistic - which could adversely affect their participation in speaking activities.

The interviews were in fact carried out with 19 students, 12 from a group similar to the one mentioned above who were enrolled on the General English Year Round course. All of them had been at IALS for several months at the time of the interviews. We felt that students from any country would naturally be more concerned about spoken English immediately after their arrival in this country and that the data would be more revealing if obtained from students who had been here long enough to overcome any initial culture shock. The interviews were conducted one-to-one in a quiet room at IALS and lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour.

Responses were recorded manually and if necessary summarised during the interviews, although every attempt was be made to record students' actual utterances where possible. (Time constraints made analysis of audio-recorded material impracticable.) As two people were to carry out interviews with subjects separately (i.e. each interviewer would interview half the participants), two pilot interviews were carried out by both of the interviewers together to try to standardise recording of information. The interview schedule in the appendix has been reduced for reasons of space; the schedule used was physically larger, and a considerable amount of space was available for 'comments', i.e. students' own words.

4. Selected frequent and instructive/revealing answers

We now list (selected) questions as they appeared and summarise the most frequent answers and other selected answers.

Because of the open-ended nature of some of the questions, there may be only small numbers for any particular response. Numbers in brackets indicate the number of responses. Where no number is given, this indicates great variation either in substance or expression.

How old were you when you started to learn English?
13 (19)

Did you speak much English in Japan?
Hardly at all (19), even those who attend private conversation classes or studied English at University.
They had learned grammar to pass exams, and translated.

Why did you decide to come to Edinburgh?
To go abroad (8)
To experience new methods and the content of the course (3)

How important is speaking to you, compared with listening, reading and writing?
It is the most important of the skills (8).
Other replies were very varied but many said or implied that the other skills were more important. Several commented that priorities here and in Japan are different, particularly if you are proposing to be a teacher, as some of the respondents were. At present, they said, speaking is not considered at *all important for teachers*, although school curriculum modifications in the mid-1990s may change this.

How much do you think your spoken English has improved here?
a little (2 on our scale) (7)
some (3 on our scale) (8)

What has helped your speaking improve? (even if improvement was small)
Socialising (9)
Speaking to their host family (6)
Classes at IALS (2)

What do you think has prevented you from improving?
Answers to this question were very varied but might be summarised as:
personal reasons - inhibitions, fear of public failure, lack of confidence, spending too much time with other Japanese students talking Japanese; linguistic reasons - poor grammar, poor listening, poor vocabulary, inability to make non-Japanese students understand, inability to keep up with native speakers.

What did you do to improve your speaking?
There was no frequent answer to this question and most of the answers involved social activities away from the Institute.
Went to the language laboratory (5) (the most frequent individual answer)
I told my host family I wanted to speak a lot (2)
I spoke to native speakers (2)
I watched TV (2)
I spoke to other foreigners in English (2)
Nothing (2)

We have doubts about some of these answers - it may be that events such as 'watched TV' were given as answers to this question simply to provide an answer.

Were there any classroom activities/tasks which you particularly (dis)liked or found useful for speaking?

Most popular (i.e. more than 10 respondents gave these activities maximum 5 scores in both areas):

a. Seminars

Although mentioned specifically only by one student in 'what helped your speaking improve', seminars were given a maximum score of 5 in both areas by all of those students who participated in them. In these weekly seminars, the students in a mono-lingual class discuss aspects of a work of literature which they have been studying. They are given class time the previous day to prepare in pairs. Each member of a seminar has 15 minutes in which to speak and answer questions. The teacher takes no part unless asked by the chairperson.

The reason for the popularity of the seminars seemed to be in the *coercive* element involved in seminar presentation - they must speak. Interviewees made comments like the following 'The Japanese will speak when they must'; 'Being forced to speak is good'; 'Japanese like to be told exactly what to do'; pilot questionnaire respondents had spoken of their reluctance to speak because of their reluctance to inconvenience others.

b. Pair/group discussion

These were popular because useful, although opinions were much qualified:

'it depends on partners', 'sometimes this doesn't go smoothly with Japanese students', 'if the topic is silly it is not so useful', 'classroom topics are often difficult for us' (=Japanese), 'it is ...difficult if the partner is older, European, knows more', 'X is very strong, aggressive...I don't like to work with him, he doesn't listen to me'.

c Projects

Project work involves going out of the classroom to interact with native speakers by, for example, conducting a survey. The material is prepared in the classroom beforehand in pairs or groups, and the outside work is usually but not always carried out by a pair - occasionally by an individual.

These are 'troublesome but useful' as they are a 'chance to meet native speakers' but they are 'better with a partner'.

Perhaps projects have a marginally coercive element - if you are to obtain the information, then you have no choice but to ask the questions.

d Language Laboratory

Other activities, intermediate in popularity, are not discussed here.

Unpopular

Sequencing

In this activity, students in a group are each given a part of a text or one of a sequence of pictures. By reading out their text or describing their pictures the group must get the parts into the correct sequence. This can make demands on them in the areas of pronunciation (reading aloud), describing scenes or activities and listening intently.

They perhaps not unreasonably found this uninteresting, difficult, frustrating, not related to daily life. An activity like this may make more sense in a non-(native)-English-speaking environment, to provide a variety of stimulus, and less when the students are living in a target-language country with a vast range of natural language encounters available. Students might also be more responsive to such a task if a pedagogical justification for it were offered beforehand.

5. Summary

One way of further summarising and classifying responses would be:

Positive	**Negative**
useful	not useful
coercive	difficult
good for me (if nerve-wracking)	Euro-Japanese contrast/conflict?
free to choose own words	
need to think	

In other words, usefulness and coercion seem to be two primary concerns. The coercive elements may permit the students to override their tendency to defer to others in pair or group work; in the seminar, it is your duty to others to talk when it is your turn.

6. Suggestions

Although the data does not lead directly to any course of action, several possibilities are suggested by a) the investigation b) our reading and c) our ongoing experience as directors of and teachers on courses for Japanese students.

1. Explicit teaching/ role-playing of appropriate interactional patterns. One solution might be to make the conversational/interactional rules of engagement of the different cultures a part of the classroom input. O'Brien (1985:75-76) suggests that:

> An instructor cannot possibly teach *all* the varieties and social functions of a foreign language, but s/he *can* and should ensure a sense of the ...potential areas of misinterpretation. Awareness, even more than correctness, will help the L2 learner ...and prepare him for conversational encounters.

2. Make our expectations more explicit - if Japanese students do not wish to stand out in any way, and wish to be told exactly what to do, then we can tell them that, in our classrooms, *not* to speak is to be unusual. Sato suggests:

> Because Asian students may be more dependent upon teachers for opportunities to talk, clarification by teachers of the appropriateness of ...self-selection may be helpful. In other words, explicit suggestions could be made as to the conduct of classroom discourse, particularly when the teachers themselves expect a more egalitarian distribution of talk to prevail. (Sato 1986:116)

3. Reading skills development to break the reliance on *yakudoku*, and thus add to their vocabulary and confidence through greater/increased reading.

4. Focus on more 'coercive' activities to provide students with security, and to satisfy their learning expectations as they adapt to our very different (teaching) style/system, although this would have to be in the interests of all, not just the linguistic group.

5. Change our expectations of our students and ourselves in speaking classes. Perhaps we need to be more aware of *all* students' need for silence and reflection, even in a speaking class; a higher percentage of receptive activities might lead ultimately to more and better speaking by all, not only Japanese students.

7. Conclusion

As practising teachers we feel the data to be instructive, and believe the suggestions above worthy of trial and investigation. It may be, however, that in our search for 'causes of and solutions to' the reticence of many of our Japanese students, we are to some extent misinterpreting their problems, and ours. Only a minority of the students interviewed said that speaking was a priority for them; and data presented in a recent seminar (19 January 1996) at IALS, based on research into learners' and teachers' perceptions of Speaking classes, (Fraser, Gilroy and Parkinson, 1996) suggests that the *students* in these classes are on the whole satisfied - it is the *teachers* who are not. Student satisfaction does not of course equate to student progress or performance, but this discrepancy may indicate that teacher anxiety leads to overestimation of student problems. Anxious to have an active role, and to give 'value for money', *teachers* may feel that silences in a Speaking class are unacceptable, while the students in fact do not. One learning style to which teachers may need to adapt is 'silence in the speaking class'.

Note: This project was devised and carried out by both E. Dwyer and A. Heller-Murphy, but E. Dwyer is responsible for the text.

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Appendix

Japanese Research

Interview Schedule

Student's name

Nationality Age Sex

Date of arrival at IAE S Interview Date

Cloze score entry leaving

Interview grade entry interview

Interviewer

Question guidelines
Preamble
We are interested in finding out Japanese students' opinions about classroom speaking activities. Would you help us by answering some questions? This will take about 30 minutes/1 hour.

Learning English in Japan

1 Age at start?
2 Why did you decide to continue?
3 Did you speak much English in Japan?
If not, who not?

Edinburgh

1 Why did you decide to come here?

2 ***How important is speaking English to you compared to listening, reading, writing?***

3 ***How much do you think your spoken English has improved?***

4 ***How does your progress compare with what you expected?***

IMPROVEMENT				
5	4	3	2	1
AS EXPECTED				
5	4	3	2	1

a *What has helped you to improve your speaking?*

b *What do you think has prevented you from improving as much as you expected?*

c *What did you yourself do to improve your speaking?*

+ Comments page

1 Physical Do you feel uncomfortable in any way when trying to deal with spoken English?

articulation
eye contact
proxemics
gesture
intonation/voice range

UNCOMFORTABLE				
5	4	3	2	1

2 Teaching context
What about the classroom - what did you expect to find there and how have you felt about any differences between practices here and in Japan?

	LIKED				
	5	4	3	2	1
the teacher perceived use of authority (include TTT, non-T-centred class)					
mobility (include sitting on desks, crouching, 'diving')					
noise (include laughter, silence, not shouting, female voice pitch)					
group/pair work					
oral/aural focus (include in non-fluency focussed classes)					
class size (does smallness of nos. leave St feeling 'exposed'?)					
class mix (include European/Japanese/Arab, mono-vs multi-lingual)					

+ Comments page

Activities

Which activities do you remember doing in your afternoon classes?

Were there any classroom activities which you particularly (dis)liked or found useful? Why (easy or difficulty, surprising, inappropriate, etc.)?

	LIKED					USEFUL				
	5 --	4	3	2	1 -	5 --	4	3	2	1 -
role-play										
scenario										
drama										
seminar										
individual presentations/talks										
pair/group discussions										
debates										
problem solving in groups										
mazes										
surveys										
projects outside the Institute										
making a TV programme										
making a radio programme										
describe & draw										
'games' - (include grammar/vocab games in non-fluency classes?)										
sequences, working out the correct sequence of a set of pictures or sentences										
language laboratory										

4 Yourself

When you are speaking Japanese, would you say you are talkative?
Why is this?
(confident, shy, 'introvert')
Do you think your experiences here outside IALS have helped in any way?
Have you enjoyed staying with a family?

+ Comments page

CONSTRUCTING REALITY THROUGH METAPHORIZING PROCESSES IN WARTIME REPORTING

Noriko Iwamoto (DAL)

Abstract

This paper considers the relationship between the 'context of situation' and 'metaphorically construed' reality within the transitivity paradigm of Systemic Functional Grammar. Employing the transitivity model advanced by Davidse (1992), it examines the discourse of Japanese wartime (World War II) reporting in newspapers from the perspective of grammatical metaphor. It concludes that there is a tendency for processes as well as entities to be metaphorized at critical junctures in the course of the war for the purpose of obscuring reality.

1. Introduction

Transitivity is a linguistic means of representing social reality by grammaticalizing the participants and processes involved in phenomena or experiences[1]. One of the notable contributions of transitivity theory is that it provides sets of choices in grammaticalizing the same non-linguistic phenomena or experiences. The choice of grammatical patterns used to encode experience naturally affects the content significantly. Halliday notes that 'the different encodings all contribute something different in total meaning' (1994: 344). Similarly, Hodge (1990, quoted in Wang 1993: 580) argues that 'form is content, and style affects meaning' in text. Fairclough (1995: 114), from a sociolinguistic point of view, notes that 'there are always alternative ways of wording any social practice, ...[and] such alternative wordings and categorizations often realize different discourses[2].'

Japanese wartime (World War II) propaganda exhibited highly actor-oriented rhetoric, in order to sound positive and be suasive, where, of course, alternative encodings were possible (Iwamoto 1995). This paper focuses on how 'PROCESS and EXTENSION' (Halliday 1994: 162) within the transitivity paradigm are projected and metaphorized in war propaganda, in order to maintain or even reinforce the positive connotation of rhetoric in highly critical domains of discourse such as those expressing death. Whether at the lexical or process level, 'choice of metaphor may be a key factor in differentiating representations in any domain, literary or non-literary' (Fairclough 1995: 114). Moreover, I will take the view that discourse in critical situations, such as those reporting death or obscuring defeats, involves a high degree of metaphorically constructed processes and entities, where more straightforward, non-metaphorical encodings are possible.

The organisation of this paper is as follows. Firstly, the 'context of situation' encoded in the texts will be introduced, including a brief history of the Pacific War and a description of the situation of the wartime press. In section 1.2, there is a description of the English-language newspapers in wartime Japan, which will be used as data for this study. Section 2 explains the model of the transitivity paradigm systematized by Davidse (1992), putting special emphasis on the metaphorization of processes in the transitivity paradigm. In the illustrative part of section 3, that theoretical model will be applied to the analysis of newspaper texts, to demonstrate how transitivity processes are metaphorized for the purpose of obfuscation. In the first part of the exemplification section, I shall show how the transitivity process expressing the critical issue of death is metaphorized as euphemism in wartime discourse by comparing it with how it is manifested in peacetime discourse. In the second part of the section, I shall examine transitivity patterns from a diachronic perspective, comparing texts from the earlier stage of the war when Japan was doing well with other texts from the latter stage when Japan was doing badly in its war effort. The paper concludes that where the necessity for propagandistic discourse is greater, the metaphorization of processes increases.

EDINBURGH WORKING PAPERS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS, number 7 (1996) ISSN 0959-2253

1.1 The Pacific War and the wartime press as 'field of discourse'

Halliday maintains that language is understood in its relation to the 'context of situation' (Halliday and Hasan 1989), and that the 'field of discourse' or 'what is happening', which is one of the three features of the 'context of situation'[3], is reflected in the ideational meanings. Ideational meaning is concerned with how we interpret and represent reality in language. This ideational meaning is mainly realised by the transitivity patterns of the grammar. First, let us briefly review the history of the Pacific War and the situation of the wartime press as a 'field of discourse' that is encoded in language structure.

After Japan entered the war with the U.S. and Britain on 8 December 1941, it won battles and kept conquering territory in Asia until 1942. After the devastating defeat of Japan's combined fleet at Midway in June 1942, which proved to be a turning point in the war against Japan, the whole war situation started to deteriorate for Japan. Following this, Japan continuously lost battles and suffered heavy casualties in various places: Guadalcanal in February 1943, in which 24,600 died, Attu in the Aleutians in May 1943, the first defeat recognised by the government, where the entire Japanese garrison, totaling about 2,000 soldiers, died, Saipan in July 1943, and Iwo Island in February 1945. In March 1945, the Americans landed at Okinawa, and 110,000 combatants and 100,000 non-combatants perished. On 15 August 1945, the Emperor finally accepted the Potsdam Proclamation and officially surrendered.

Several laws were enacted to expand government control over the press, particularly after 1940 (cf. Shillony 1981, Mitchell 1983). As long as Japanese forces were victorious, there was little need to distort the news, but when the retreating began, the reliability of the official statements generally declined, and even defeats were reported as victories with bombastic language style (Shillony 1981, Yamanaka 1989, *Asahi shinbun sha-shi* 1991). As in many countries at war, maintaining public morale was considered to be more important than pursuing the truth.

Ryootaroo Shiba (1978: 7-8), a historical novelist, discusses how the inflated bombastic, ornamental style in war reporting of the Japanese Army historically, dates back to the period of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 to 1905. The features of this style include, for example, the use of superlative adjectives such as in 'the morale of our troops is the most vigorous'. The Army's reports, in general, were lacking in objectivity which is supposed to be very important in war reports. After this war, this style became established as one of the distinctive features of their war reports, and it was very pervasive during the Pacific War.

This social reality of an institutionalized system for maintaining people's morale through the press is the 'field of discourse' that was manifested in language. As will be discussed, the changes in war reportage over time, as Japan moved from winning to losing, are clearly configured in the transitivity patterns in propaganda.

1.2 English-language newspapers in wartime Japan

Since English was the language of Japan's enemy nations, it had to be banished from the life of Japan during the war. However, the Japanese people faced a dilemma here: English had been the principal foreign language in Japan for a long time, particularly in the area of science and technology. Moreover, it was the only language through which Japan could communicate with the occupied nations in Asia (Shillony 1981: 148). English-language newspapers such as *The Japan Times and Advertiser*, which contained the same highly propagandistic and nationalistic discourse as Japanese-language newspapers, continued to appear throughout the war along with *Contemporary Japan*, *Nippon Today and Tomorrow* and *Cultural Nippon*. Nevertheless, vernacular newspapers and magazines that had foreign titles were encouraged to 'Japanize'; thus the English daily *The Japan Times and Advertiser* became the *Nippon Times* (now the *Japan Times*) in 1943 (Shillony 1981: 148).

As data for the analysis I have used the *Japan Times and Advertiser*, later called the *Nippon Times*, which was 'the English mouthpiece of the Foreign Ministry' (Reynold 1991: 109). They were written and edited by the Japanese, and reflected Japanese positions and world-views. These English-language newspapers addressed themselves to foreigners in Japan and to English-speaking readers in the occupied territories, but

they were also read by many Japanese for the purpose of practicing English (Shillony 1981: 149). Thus, Japan's propaganda activities were pervasive and not restricted to publications in the Japanese language, despite the fact that English was the language of the enemy nations and its use for other functions was discontinued.

2. Transitivity paradigm

My analysis of Japanese wartime propaganda is based on the model of transitivity paradigm for *Material Processes*, which was developed by Davidse[4] (1992). *Material Process* is concerned with process of doing in the physical world. A simplified version of Davidse's system network is presented in figure 1, employing sub-categorizations or sub-classifications that are relevant to my analysis.

2.1. Three types of transitive constellations: EFFECTIVE, MIDDLE and PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures

Davidse presents three types of constellations of *Material Process*: (1) the EFFECTIVE *Actor-Goal* structure - effective in the sense that *Goals* are coded as what is affected. Transitive EFFECTIVE structure is further divided into goal-directed, intentional process, such as *He kicked the ball*, and goal-achieving, non-intentional process, such as in *The lightening hit the tree*. (2) The MIDDLE structure consists of *Actor-Process* constellations, which do not extend to a *Goal*. MIDDLE structure is further divided into superventive (e.g. *He fell, he died*) and non-superventive, controllable process (e.g. *The children are swimming*). (3) 'Metaphorical' PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures consist of *Actor-Process-Range* constructions where *Ranges* are coded as NON-AFFECTED. The examples of this structure include *He died an honourable death, The athlete jumped the hurdle*. In Halliday's term, *Range* means a continuation or restatement of process (1967, 1994). The PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structure is located between the EFFECTIVE and the MIDDLE structure in the sense that 'Ranged structures basically represent a middle process' since 'the *Range* is not a real participant in the process but simply specifies its scope' (Davidse 1992: 196). Nevertheless, the Ranged structure (PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure) looks like an EFFECTIVE structure (Davidse 1992: 124). Davidse's contribution lies in her setting this categorical concept of PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE between EFFECTIVE and MIDDLE structures, which she terms 'metaphorical' (108).

Regarding the possibility of 'metaphorization' of this PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure, Davidse maintains (1992: 127):

> Within the transitive paradigm the *Actor* is the most nuclear participant; this participant cannot possibly be 'reduced' or 'metaphorized'. The central transitive variable is: will the action be extended or not to a *Goal*? .... The grammatical metaphor of 'ranging' operates on this area of variability within the model by creating a 'pseudo-extension' of the process. Cognate *Ranges* such as *sing a song, die a horrible death* restate the process: they represent 'an extension inherent in the process' (Halliday 1967: 59).

This is why the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure is metaphorical in terms of grammaticalizing process and extension while EFFECTIVE and MIDDLE structures are more straightforward in the encoding of the processes selected. The PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure, which thus constitutes metaphorical extension, is extensively exploited in Japanese wartime propaganda, especially in critical stages of the war, because although it semantically represents a MIDDLE structure, it looks like an EFFECTIVE structure. In particular, combined with the uses of superlative adverbs or adjectives, the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure, which is a semantically MIDDLE structure, can give the impression of being an EFFECTIVE structure of intentional, goal-directed process rather than a non-intentional goal-achieving process, thus adding a stronger positive connotation to the flow of discourse. An example of this is *Heroes met gallant deaths*; this is a MIDDLE structure (i.e. heroes died), but looks like a goal-directed EFFECTIVE structure (discussed in 2.3). However, in peacetime 'non-critical' discourse (defined in 3.2), fewer metaphorical patterns are used; for instance, in describing death, the one who died constitutes an *Actor* in the transitive MIDDLE structure, who is 'out of control' in a 'superventive' event (e.g. *He died*). Alternatively the one who died may be encoded

as a *Goal* or *Affected* in an EFFECTIVE passive structure (e.g. *He was killed*) (See Figure 1). I return to this point in section 3.

Of course, the grammatical feature of PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure should not always be equated with euphemism and obfuscation. A structure of this type can be used for very different purposes, for example, *He died a horrible death, They declined into insignificance*. My point is that the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure is one of the useful grammatical features that is likely to be exploited for euphemism or obfuscation in the 'critical' discourse of war propaganda because of its abstraction and metaphorization functions. It can be used to reinforce a positive connotation in discoursal flow.

- MIDDLE
  - + superventive *He fell. He died.*
    Actor **[- control]** - ***Process***
  - - superventive *The children are running*
    The soldiers are marching
    Actor **[+ control]** - ***Process***
- PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE *It's raining cats and dogs*
  He died the death of a saint
  They are running a race
  Actor - Process - Range
- EFFECTIVE
  - goal-directed *The teacher hit the child*
    The lion is chasing the tourist
    Actor **[+ intentional]** - ***Process - Goal***
  - goal-achieving *The doctor accidentally touched a nerve*
    The arrow hit the target
    Actor **[- intentional]** - ***Process - Goal***

Figure 1 Material Processes: primary transitive systems
(cf. Davidse 1992: 130)

2.2 Nominalizing metaphor and thematization within the transitivity paradigm

In relation to the abstraction (i.e. transfer from a concrete to an abstract sense) associated with metaphorization discussed here, it is important to consider the issue of nominalization. Lyons (1977: 445) maintains:

> Reference to both second-order entities and third-order entities[5] is made commonly, both in English and in other languages, by means of phrases formed by the process of nominalization.

Nominalization is a grammatical means of abstracting and neutralizing causality or 'who does what to whom or to what'; so this transformation is useful in propagandistic discourse in that it can take the reader's thought away from the unfavourable reality. To reiterate, referring to second and third-order entities by using nominalized forms involves a function of obfuscation.

Another function of nominalization is that it is possible to convert a process into a theme-like element, or to transfer non-participant meanings into participant-like ones. Halliday terms this process 'nominalizing metaphor' within a broader framework of the 'ideational metaphor[6]' or grammatical metaphor. The nominalizing metaphor produces a high level of abstraction in text (Martin 1992). The importance of nominalization in grammatical metaphor is widely discussed in the paradigm of systemic grammar (for example, Jones 1988, Ravelli 1988, Martin 1992, Halliday 1989, Halliday and Martin 1993). According to Halliday:

> Nominalizing is the single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphor. By this device, processes (congruently worded as verbs) and properties (congruently worded as adjectives) are reworded metaphorically as nouns; instead of functioning in the clause, as Process or Attribute[7], they function as Thing in the nominal group[8] (Halliday 1994: 352).

In regard to the noun-theme relationship, Halliday also says, 'dressing up as a noun is the only way to be thematic' (1989: 74). Thus, complex passages can be 'packaged' in nominal form as Themes (Halliday 1994: 353). Examples of this include:

> there is no absolute truth → the non-existence of absolute truth
> they were able to enter the lab. → their access to the lab.
> the weather was getting better → an improvement in the weather

Through metaphorical realisation which involves nominalization, 'the idea of processes are still encoded, and yet it is things [i.e. *non-existence, access, improvement*] which have been realised' (Ravelli 1988:135). In the transitive PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structure, *Ranges* often consist of processes, or second-order entities which have been thematized in this way. Matthiessen (1992: 56) also suggests that grammatical metaphor is a second-order use of grammatical resources. By 'second-order' reality, Matthiessen refers to 'the reality brought into existence by language itself' (1992: 42). When processes are replaced by (second-order) nominals through nominalization, some information is lost (Halliday 1994: 353). It is useful in the case of propaganda if process itself is thematized when it is necessary to efface what was lost or gained, as in defeats in the war.

Another aspect of nominalization is the 'greater potential that is open to nouns in contrast to verbs', for nouns can be modified in different ways and can be thus expanded more easily than verbs (Halliday 1989: 95, 1994: 147). As a specific example of the greater potential of nouns, it is difficult to replace nouns by verbs in examples such as *make three silly mistakes, have a nice hot bath, make a vigorous final attack*, and *meet a heroic honourable death*, using the verbs, *mistake, bathe, attack* and *die*. In these cases, processes are represented by the combination of lexically empty process verbs (*make, have*, and *meet*) with nouns indicating the action or event (*mistake, bath, attack* and *death*) (Halliday 1989: 95). The resulting nominal groups (i.e. adjectives + nouns), such as *a vigorous final attack* and *a heroic honourable death* can then function as participants and not as process verbs (Halliday 1994: 147). These so-called nominal metaphors were extensively used at critical stages of the propaganda war, as will be discussed shortly.

2.3. The uses of Attitudinal Epithet

Epithets suggest some quality of an entity, and traditionally are called adjectives. They can refer to an objective quality of the thing such as *red, yellow, old, striped, windy*, or they can be expressions of the speaker's subjective attitude towards it, such as *lovely, fantastic, beautiful, valuable, meaningless* (Halliday 1994: 184). Halliday terms the latter type of Epithets 'Attitudinal Epithets' and they represent an 'interpersonal element', serving an 'attitudinal function' (Halliday 1994: 184).

These Attitudinal Epithets were abundantly used in Japanese wartime propaganda. As previously mentioned, the use of superlative adjectives and adverbs was one of the distinctive stylistic features of the war reporting of the Japanese Army since the period of the Russo-Japanese War (Shiba 1978: 7-8). Which function do they have in the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures (*Actor-Process-Range*) in question? One of the characteristics of *Ranges* that consist of nominalized processes is that they can be modified or specified by Epithets for quantity or quality, as in *They played four good games of tennis* (Halliday 1994: 147-149). The uses of Attitudinal Epithets which modify nominalized *Ranges* in PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structures contributed to the propagandists' effort to make PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures look like EFFECTIVE structures. Some examples are the word *glorious* in the sentence *He died a glorious death*, or the word *heroic* in the sentence *He died a heroic death*. Although Halliday says that Epithets consist of adjectives or verbs, I would suggest that, in a broader sense, adverbs may be included as Epithets in the sense that they serve the same 'attitudinal function' of representing the speaker's subjective attitude. A typical example from Japanese war propaganda would be the word *gallantly* in the sentence *They gallantly*

met death. To say *They gallantly met death*, sounds more goal-directed than to simply say *They died*, although these two sentences share a certain core meaning. With the use of these Attitudinal Epithets, a connotation of goal-directness is conveyed in sentences, with the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures.

2.4. Agent-Carrier and Attribute in Relational Process

It is not only PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures in Material Process that are exploited to create the image of EFFECTIVE structures; a construction in Relational Process is often used to metaphorically present a process as if it were a transitive EFFECTIVE structure (*Actor-Process-Goal*), although Relational Processes usually merely represent an abstract relationship between entities and quality.

Relational Process is concerned with process of being in the world of abstract relations. One of the dominant constructions of Relational Processes is the *Carrier-Process-Attribute* structure in the attributive mode. The attributive mode means the condition where 'an entity has some quality ascribed or attributed to it'. This quality is called the *Attribute*, and 'the entity to which it is ascribed is called *Carrier*' (Halliday 1994: 120). For example, in *She is happy*, *she* is the *Carrier* and *happy* is the *Attribute*. Fawcett (1987) presents the compound role of *Agent-Carrier*, which has the quality of both *Agent* and *Carrier*. Examples of this include *she* in *She kept very quiet not to disturb a sleeping baby*, and *John* in *John finally became the boss after eight years' hard work* (Fawcett 1987: 154).

What is relevant to my analysis of war propaganda is that the construction *Agent Carrier-Process-Attribute* (abstract second-order nominals) in Relational Process with Attitudinal Epithets is also exploited to create the impression of *Actor-Material Process-Goal* (transitive EFFECTIVE structure). For example, *The soldiers manifesting superb spirit* or *They demonstrated the true mettle of Japanese fighting men*. Here *the soldiers* and *they* are *Carriers*, and *spirit* and *mettle* are *Attributes*, and *manifest* and *demonstrate* are Relational Process verbs in respective sentences. Unlike the case of the *Actor-Material Process-Goal* construction, the physical world is not directly affected by Relational Processes. But it gives the image that this Relational Process construction positively creates or affects something as if it were *an Actor-Material Process-Goal* structure. This may be because *spirit* and *mettle* can give the impression of being physical discrete objects (Lyons' first-order entities) or *Goals* existing in the material world although they are simply *Attributes* consisting of abstract second-order entities that are ascribed to *Carriers*. The same can be said of the passive construction of this type in Relational Process - that is, *Attribute-Relational Process-(Agent-Carrier)*. For example, *True heroism demonstrated*, or *The martial spirit displayed by our Imperial garrison on Attu Island* (Nippon Times, 31 May 1943, evening edition). *Heroism* and *martial spirit* are *Attributes* and *our Imperial garrison* is the *Agent-Carrier*. But these sentences create the impression of *Goal-Material Process-(Actor)* constructions as if *heroism* and *martial spirit* are existing things in the physical world as first-order nominals.

This construction in Relational Process appears a lot especially in later stages of the war, as will be discussed in the following section.

3. Exemplification

This section analyses, as examples of war propaganda, illustrative texts from *Japan Times and Advertiser* and the *Nippon Times*, using Davidse's transitivity model combined with Halliday's nominalizing metaphor and Attitudinal Epithets. It then compares the data with that from *Japan Times* (as examples of peacetime discourse). Firstly, I will consider how death is represented euphemistically within the transitive paradigm, and secondly, look at the diachronic changes in transitivity patterns during wartime. It should be emphasized that the significance of the grammatical data is in the choice of one form rather than another to represent the same non-linguistic events or processes. Of course, differences in expression are not 'random accidental alternatives' (Fowler 1991: 4). The choice of grammatical patterns used to encode the same experience carries ideological significance (Fowler 1991: 4).

3.1 Euphemisms for 'death' and transitivity metaphors

Death is the most sensitive but unavoidable aspect of war. New terms of reverence were created at the lexical level in Japanese as euphemisms, incorporating traditional cultural values. For example, *gyokusai* (lit. smashed jewels), is an allusion to an ancient Chinese text about how a man of moral superiority prefers to see his precious jades smashed than to compromise with others. Another popular metaphorical term was *sanga* (lit. falling of cherry blossoms). Cherry blossoms had long been valued by the Japanese as much for their ephemerality as for their beauty; no sooner have they reached perfection than they fall. Also *jiketsu* (lit. decide by oneself, meaning 'commit suicide') was used, which connotes the desirability of choosing one's own destiny rather than having it forced upon one by others.

Notice that these metaphors were lexicalized in Japanese; importantly, 'the"interest" or "relevance" areas of a language community are relatively densely lexicalized, because 'they become generally accepted and thus conventionalised' (Quirk and Stein 1993: 47-48). To use Halliday's terms, 'the ideational content is densely packed in nominal constructions' (1994: 352) in referring to some relevant areas of a language community. Now, the question is how English-language newspapers used these lexicalized euphemisms.

One of the critical problems involved in translation is the issue of equivalence. As Meetham and Hudson (1972: 713 quoted in Belt 1991: 6) maintain:

> Texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence).

Because of the gap in equivalence in levels or ranks between different languages, something can always be 'lost' in the translation process (Belt 1991: 6). No doubt, literal translations of concepts such as *smashed jewels* or *falling of cherry blossoms* do not sound like natural English. Nevertheless, an effort is commonly made to retain the author's intention or 'communicative values' (in this case, 'to glorify death'). In this instance, what was lexicalized in Japanese as euphemism was expressed, exploiting certain PROCESS-EXTENSION types in English to maintain the same communicative values: specifically, by using the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structures, which constitutes metaphorical extension, as one kind of euphemism.

In referring to death, PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures are widely used in collocation with Attitudinal Epithets, such as *heroic*, *glorious*, and *unflinchingly*. Nominalized processes such as 'death' or 'end' are thematized so that the reader's attention may be focused more on 'process' (what they did) than on the results. Consider some examples from a text reporting Japanese total defeat at Attu Island:

Abbreviations

Pr. = Process Mat. = Material Rel. = Relational Cir. = Circumstance
Ag. - Carrier = Agent-Carrier

(1) BRAVE JAPANESE SOLDIERS AT ATTU MEET HEROIC END
Actor *Pr.. Mat.* *Range*

(Nippon Times, 31 May 1943)

(2) HEROES DIE GLORIOUS DEATH
Actor *Pr.. Mat.* *Range*

(Nippon Times, 31 May 1943, evening edition)

(3) ... Colonel Yasuyo Yamazaki, the commander, and brave men of the Attu Japanese
Actors
garrison corps died the most heroic and glorious death in a fight
Pr.. Mat. *Range*

67

against heavy odds ...

(Nippon Times, 31 May 1943, evening edition)

(4) ... the defending forces, ... met their heroic deaths
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Range*

(Nippon Times, 11 June 1943)

(5) ... They (soldiers at Attu) gallantly met death
Actor *Cir.: Manner* *Pr.: Mat* *Range*

(Nippon Times, 4 September 1943)

(6) ... 2000 defenders of Attu island ... met death unflinchingly
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Range* *Cir.: Manner*
with a smile on their faces
Cir.: Manner

(Nippon Times, 4 September 1943)

(7) ... the men of the Imperial Forces stood their ground to the very last man.
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Range* *Cir.: Extent*

(Nippon Times, 31 May 1943, evening edition)

These sentences constitute metaphorical PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE patterns (*Actor-Process-Range*). In (2) and (3), *Range* simply restates the process as in 'die a glorious death'. 'Death' here exemplifies 'an extension inherent in the process' (Halliday 1967: 59). It is a characteristic of *Ranges* consisting of nominalized processes that they can be modified or specified for quantity or quality (Halliday 1994: 149), such as in (3) 'died the most heroic and glorious death'. Nominalized *Ranges* (*death, end*) thus modified or specified by Attitudinal Epithets (*heroic, glorious, gallantly, unflinchingly*) in PSEUDO-TRANSITIVE structures, which Halliday terms *Quality Ranges* (*glorious death, heroic end*) connote voluntary, courageous acts of dying chosen by the soldiers themselves in propagandistic discourse. The words 'death' and 'end' have to do with nominalizing metaphor in the sense that they are nominalized processes (second-order entities) rather than objects (first-order entities) (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 19). These nominalized processes are 'dressed up as Themes' so that PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures which semantically represent MIDDLE structures, give the impression of EFFECTIVE structures. In this way, a positive, goal-directed connotation increases.

The expression 'meet death' in (1), (4), (5) and (6) can be considered metaphorical in a double sense, if we extend the term to involve a transfer of meaning from material to mental processes, as in *'I cannot grasp it'* or *'I don't follow'* (Halliday 1994: 340). The words 'death' and 'end' are already metaphorical because the process of dying is packaged in nominal forms in these words (i.e. nominalizing metaphor). There is a second metaphorical transference: material process is used like mental process. 'Meet' is usually used in material processes, but here by saying 'meet death' or 'meet heroic end', it also connotes a mental process that took place within the consciousness of a person. In this way, these two steps of metaphorical transference are involved.

(7) implicitly suggests that all the men of the forces died. But this example also connotes positive, goal-directed, intentional action of the soldiers. 'Their ground' in 'stood their ground' is a *Range* of second-order nominal, and specifies the scope of the process verb 'stood'; 'stood' and 'their ground' lie along a single continuum since they do no exist independent of each other as in the relationship between '*Process + Goal*'. But 'their ground' looks like a *Goal* (i.e. a Thing, a first-order nominal) in the Effective structure, which the soldiers obtained or positively acted upon. A pessimistic expression 'to the very last man' is pushed backward in a circumstantial clause, and positive connotation is maintained in this way.

In discussing 'death', the matter of propriety is also at issue as well as its grammatical realisation. The Battle of Attu, being the first major defeat recognised by the Japanese government, still reported 'death' openly as in the above examples, even if euphemistically. In later stages of the war the fact of death was not even openly reported as casualties in the main battles in which Japan lost (see section 3.3.2 for further discussion).

3.2 Possible transitive alternatives to encode death: comparison with peacetime transitive patterns

Let us consider how peacetime discourse exhibits less use of metaphorical transitivity patterns than wartime propaganda, to refer to the same phenomenon of death, in order to characterize the nature of the data as propaganda more clearly. Characterization necessitates comparison, and so 'if something is stated metaphorically, it should be metaphorical by reference to something else' (Halliday 1994: 342). For comparison with peacetime discourse, it is necessary that the treatment of death in peacetime discourse be further divided into two sub-categories: 'critical' peacetime disaster stories and 'non-critical' disaster stories. The former refers to events which could be interpreted as a sort of national crisis in which the authority's or administration's credibility is likely to be questioned, for example, the speech written for Ronald Reagan after the explosion of the 'Challenger' space shuttle in January 1986. The latter refers to inevitable events that take place beyond control of the authority, such as natural disasters. In reporting events of the latter type, the media need not be so sensitive to their effect on public opinion or morale as in wartime or as in the case of 'critical' peacetime disaster events. For comparison with wartime discourse, 'non-critical' disaster stories are used in this analysis since it is expected that they exhibit more clear-cut, less metaphorical grammatical forms than peacetime 'critical' stories in describing death. In 'non-critical' peacetime stories, death can be expressed in a straightforward way, directly and clearly without relying on euphemism, in transitive EFFECTIVE or MIDDLE structures without using the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures or Attitudinal Epithets. The following are some examples from 'non-critical' peacetime discourse. (8) reports on deaths from drug use, (9) on typhoon casualties, (10) on a massacre in a place far-away from Japan, and (11) reports on the shooting down of a South Korean civilian airliner by Soviet fighters.

(8) 20 DIED FROM SIDE EFFECTS OF DRUG IN 1982
Actor [-control] *Pr.: Mat.* *Cir.: Cause*

---- MIDDLE structure
(The Japan Times, 13 September 1983)

(9) At least 1,400 persons were killed in addition to 5,200 injured ....
Goal *Pr.: Mat* *Goal* *Pr.: Mat.*
throughout Japan in the typhoon ....
Cir.: Location

--- EFFECTIVE structure
(The Japan Times, 22 September 1934)

(10) WAR SPREADS IN LEBANON; 70 CHRISTIANS MASSACRED
Goal *Pr.: Mat*

--- EFFECTIVE structure
(The Japan Times, 12 September 1983)

(11) ... 269 people (were) killed when Soviet fighters shot down
Goal *Pr.: Mat* *Cir.: Time*
a South Korean civilian airliner

--- EFFECTIVE structure
(The Japan Times, 12 September 1983)

(8) is a clear-cut non-metaphorical expression of dying.[9] In (8) '20 (people)' constitutes an *Actor* in the transitive MIDDLE structure, who is 'without control' over the process and died from a 'superventive' event - at least, such an impression is given, especially since there is no use of Attitudinal Epithets to 'glorify' death. Unlike in war discourse, the process of dying is described as something beyond human control. (9), (10) and (11) encode the victims as the affected who were passively killed in the non-metaphorical, EFFECTIVE structure of passive construction (*Goal - Process*), and they encode the killing as the result of an effective action performed by some external agency. If in war discourse, deaths were reported simply as, 'Japanese soldiers died' in a MIDDLE structure with no Attitudinal Epithets, or passively as 'the Japanese

soldiers were killed in action' in an EFFECTIVE passive structure in which those killed are represented as the affected, only negative and receptive tones would be produced.

Thus, what was lexicalized in the Japanese language as euphemism (e.g. *sanga, gyokusai, jiketsu*) was realized at process level in English, using metaphorical PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structures, retaining the writer's original intention of glorifying death in war propaganda.

The use of this grammatical form is the choice rather than another to encode the same event of death. But 'the different encodings contribute something different to the total meaning in discourse' (Halliday 1994: 344). The choice was not necessarily due to grammatical awareness of propagandists about grammatical metaphor, nominalization or the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE construction, but rather to the pressure from propagandistic discourse which favoured the selection of certain forms. Halliday and Martin (1993: 82) maintain that certain grammatical forms in discourse evolve rather 'naturally in response to pressure from the discourse'. Specifically, concerning grammatical metaphor or metaphorical significance of 'they met glorious deaths', instead of simply saying 'they died', there was no necessity for them to be intentional in their grammatical use or choice. But the flow of discourse which intends to 'glorify death' preferred to use the former rather than the latter form.

3.3 Diachronic changes in transitive patterns during wartime: from EFFECTIVE to PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE

Since the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE construction has the advantage of looking EFFECTIVE although it is semantically MIDDLE, it was broadly used particularly in the later stages of the war, in describing Japanese defeats. When Japan was successful in the earlier stages of the war (1941-1942), there was no need to resort to a propagandistic, ornamental language style. Since Japan was winning and gaining territory, the results were reported in a straightforward way, using EFFECTIVE structures. Therefore, headlines of war reports in newspapers in 1941-1942 were full of transitive EFFECTIVE structures: *Actor-Process-Goal (Goal* here: Lyons' first-order nominals), ((12), (13), (15), (16) and (18)), or passives, *Goal-Process-(Actor)* ((13), (14), (15) and (17)) as illustrated in the examples below.

3.3.1. When Japan was doing well: early stages of the war

(12) JAPAN TAKES OVER ENEMY PROPERTIES
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Goal*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 9 December 1941)

(13) JAPANESE DOWN 202 U.S. PLANES ON PHILIPPINES
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal*

Entire Area Is Blasted by Air Force on Thursday
Goal *Pr.: Mat* *Actor*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 12 December 1941)

(14) KOWLOON OCCUPIED BY JAPANESE ARMY IN TERRIFIC BATTLE
Goal *Pr.: Mat* *Actor* *Cir.: Manner*

City Fully Occupied By Imperial Army on Friday
Goal *Cir.: Manner* *Pr.: Mat.* *Actor* *Cir.: Time*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 13 December 1941)

(15) ARMY RAIDS MALAY, BURMA BASES; PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE WIPED OUT
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal* *Goal* *Pr.: Mat.*

MANILA PARALYZED; BRITISH MECHANIZED DIVISION IS DESTROYED
Goal *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal* *Pr.: Mat.*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 15 December 1941)

(16) JAPANESE UNITS TAKE KUCHING, ARMY OCCUPIES IPOH, MALAYA
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal* *Actor* *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal*

SUBS SINK 10 SHIPS IN PACIFIC
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Goal*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 30 December 1941)

(17) HONG KONG FULLY OCCUPIED
Goal *Cir.: Manner* *Pr.: Mat.*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 27 December 1941)

(18) ARMY CRUSHING ENEMY IN LUZON, OCCUPIES BASE IN WEST MALAYA
Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Goal* *Pr.: Mat.* *Goal*

(Japan Times & Advertiser, 16 December 1941)

These are some typical examples of headlines that commonly appeared in an early stage of war, 1941-1942. They generally represent EFFECTIVE transitive structures since Japan was winning, and occupying new territory in those days, and thus it was possible for Japan to use *Actor-Process-Goal or Goal-Process (-Actor)* constructions (where the *Goal* is a concrete, first-order nominal, and hence a lesser degree of metaphorization involved) which represent roles explicitly.

3.3.2. When Japan was doing badly: later stages of war

However, when the war situation became unfavourable for Japan, the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures started to appear, which sounded goal-directed and positive. For example, total defeats in Okinawa and Iwo Island in 1945 were expressed as follows.

• Japanese defeat at Iwo Island

(19) JAPANESE AT YIOJIMA LAUNCH FINAL DRIVE AGAINST US. TROOPS
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Range*

(20) The Japanese Forces on Yiojima have inflicted about 33,000 casualties on
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Range*
the American officers and men .. up to March 16.
Cir.: Extent

(21) All the officers and men with the Supreme Commander at the head, launched
Actor *Pr.: Mat.*
a dauntless general attack at midnight of March 17 ...
Range *Cir.: Time*

(*Nippon Times*, 22 March, 1945)

• Japanese defeat at Okinawa

(22) NIPPON FORCES CARRY OUT FINAL ATTACK ON OKINAWA
Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Range* *Cir.: Loc.*

(23)

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.... the Imperial Japanese Forces commanded by

Actor *Pr.: Mat.*

Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima and navy units led by Rear Admiral Minoru

Actor *Actor*

Ota launched their final offensive against the invasion forces

Pr.: Mat *Range*

(24) USHIJIMA, OTHER UNITS WIN SUPREME HONOR

Actor *Pr.: Mat.* *Range*

FOR GALLANT DEFENSE ACTION IN OKINAWA

Cir.: Cause

(25) .... The Ushijima Unit and other Units attached thereto, manifesting superb

Actor/ Ag.- Carrier *Pr.: Rel.*

fighting spirit and superior fighting technique, inflicting heavy losses on the

Attribute *Attribute* *Pr.: Mat.* *Range*

enemy forces, since their invasion of the Okinawa area on March 25 of this year,

thus demonstrating the sterling quality of Japanese fighting men, had been

Pr.: Rel. *Attribute*

previously granted a citation...

(26) The above (the Ushijima Unit and other Units attached thereto) under the command of

Actor/ Ag. - Carrier

Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima has maintained a heroic stand ... thus demonstrating

Pr.: Mat. *Range* *Pr.: Rel.*

the true mettle of Japanese fighting men.

Attribute

(27) Not only have they manifested the superb might of the Japanese Forces

Ag. - Carrier *Pr.: Rel.* *Attribute*

but they have facilitated operations by Japanese Air Units .....

Actor *Pr.: Mat* *Goal*

(*Nippon Times*, 26 June, 1945)

Headlines in the final stage of war, reporting total defeats, commonly consisted of PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structures, *Actor-Process-Range*. The *Range* here is a second-order nominal and thus abstraction is involved much more than in the early stages of war, when Japan was doing well, and it was possible to use clear-cut EFFECTIVE (*Actor - Process - Goal*) structures. This may be because the censorship regulations institutionalized and unified the content of reporting as the war situation worsened. To support this observation on diachronic changes in grammatical patterns, Shiba (1978: 8), the aforementioned historical novelist, notes that even from the time of the Russo-Japanese War, unless a war report by the Army explicitly said, for example, 'we have conquered the fortress X', in the EFFECTIVE structure (*Actor - Process - Goal*), it could be inferred that the Japanese forces were losing. 'Final drive' in (19), 'casualties' in (20), 'a dauntless general attack' in (21), 'final attack' in (22), 'final offensive' in (23), 'supreme honor' in

(24), and 'loss' in (25) are *Ranges* modified by Epithets which indicate simply continuation of processes. Nevertheless, they are nominalized processes which look like 'theme-like' elements, so they give the illusion that something was achieved through their use in EFFECTIVE structures. In this way, process itself is thematized in the transitive PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures while what they lost or gained is effaced. 'Supreme honor' in (24) conveys the image of having won although it was a loss in reality. 'Final attack' in (22) is also a *Range*; if (22) were instead phrased as, 'Nippon Forces Attacked the Enemy', representing 'attack' not as a second-order 'nominal' but as a 'process' (verb), the reader's reaction might be 'what was the outcome?' Phrased as in (22), the reader is less likely to ask this question. The same can be said of (19), (20), (21), (23) and (25), which represent PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures where process itself is thematized, and where the reader's attention is focused more on what the Japanese did as process, than on what has happened as a result. There are no corresponding verbs for 'casualty' or 'offensive', but these can be replaced by other verbs.

Agent Carrier - Process - Attribute in Relational Process is also exploited to give the impression that there is '*Actor - Process - Goal*' (transitive EFFECTIVE structure) as in (25), (26) and (27). The uses of Attitudinal Epithets, 'superb', 'sterling' 'superior', 'heroic' contribute to disguise the *Agent Carrier - Relational Process - Attribute* construction as the *Actor - Material Process - Goal* structure. *Attributes* here also consist of abstract, second-order nominals, such as 'spirit', 'the (sterling) quality', 'the (true) mettle', 'the (superb) might', '(superior, fighting) technique' 'Operations' as *Goal* in (27) is different in nature from *Goals* found in (12) to (18) in that they signify clear-cut, physical first-order nominals (the enemy's properties or territory), whereas 'operations' in (27) is a second-order abstract entity on 'our' side (not the enemy's).

Note that these sentences can be restated as EFFECTIVE structure-sentences (i.e. The possible transitive alternatives, encoding Japanese 'defeats' in the EFFECTIVE structure, clarifying '*Goals*' (what Japan lost, i.e. first-order nominals), which do not appear in the official newspapers) as follows:

(28) * Enemy Takes Over Okinawa (29) * Enemy Conquers Yiojima

Actor *Pr.. Mat.* *Goal* *Actor* *Pr.. Mat.* *Goal*

(30) * All Japanese Garrisons Defeated

Goal *Pr.. Mat*

(31) * All Japanese Warships Destroyed

Goal *Pr.. Mat*

(32) * Okinawa Island Pounded All Day

Goal *Pr.. Mat.* *Cir.. Duration*

Again, regarding propriety in referring to 'death', it seems that death as Japanese casualty is not openly reported even euphemistically at the final stage of war (1945) unlike in the data of the Battle of Attu in 1943, where it was reported in expressions such as 'heroes died glorious deaths'. It is obvious that the casualties inflicted upon the Japanese forces and people were much greater in 1945 than in 1943, as the war situation became more desperate for Japan. Despite all this, only the positive aspects of information were reported officially in the final stage of war, such as 'win honour' or 'made a final attack', avoiding the mentioning of death on the Japanese side. This may be because the censorship regulations were more institutionalized and, in a way, sophisticated, to avoid the breakdown of people's morale as the war situation became more pessimistic.

4. Conclusion

As the above discussion has indicated, the metaphorical PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE transitive structure in Material Process can be a useful linguistic tool in obscuring unfavourable reality because this construction signifies a MIDDLE structure but looks like a goal-directed EFFECTIVE structure. The PSEUDO-

EFFECTIVE structure, which constitutes metaphorical extension, is used especially in critical situations such as in reporting death, and the frequency of its use increased particularly at the later stages of the war. The uses of Attitudinal Epithets contribute to disguising the PSEUDO-EFFECTIVE structures as EFFECTIVE structures. Nominalized metaphors as *Ranges* also contribute to the creation of Theme-like elements which can function as PSEUDO-Goals.

Agent Carrier - Process - Attribute (abstract nouns) in Relational Process in collocation with Attitudinal Epithets can also be a useful linguistic construction in that this can create the impression that we have EFFECTIVE transitive structures despite the fact that Relational Process is simply concerned with abstract relations between the *Carrier* and the *Attribute*, and the physical world is not really affected by the process.

It is also important to emphasize that the significance of the grammatical data from war reporting is the choice of one form rather than another, and not that given meanings inhere in given structures. The choice was not necessarily made because of conscious grammatical planning by propagandists, but rather because the pressure from the discourse of propaganda favoured the selection of certain patterns. It becomes clearer, as this study has hopefully revealed, how certain grammatical patterns and metaphor associated with them were exploited to achieve what the propagandists aimed for, when the discourse of propaganda is analysed from the Systemic Functional point of view.

Notes

1. I would like to express my gratitude to the following people: Keith Mitchell, Phil Morrow, Jean Ure, Tatsuaki Tomioka and an anonymous EWPAL reader.

For a general description of the transitivity model used in this analysis, please see Berry (1975), Eggins (1994), and Halliday (1994). Montgomery (1986) includes a more simplified version of the transitivity system.

2. Fairclough defines a 'discourse' as a 'particular way of constructing a particular (domain of) social practice' (1995: 76).

3. Halliday's 'context of situation' involves three features that together characterize a passage of discourse. These three features are 'field' (what is going on), 'tenor' (who are taking part), and 'mode' (how the message is structured) (Halliday and Hasan 1989: 12).

4. Davidse also presents an Ergative framework along with the Transitive paradigm. While the transitivity system realises an *Actor-Process* and *Extension* model (Halliday 1994: 162), the Ergative system signifies an *Instigation* of *Process* model (Halliday 1994: 163). To put it simply, transitive analysis is Actor-oriented, while the Ergative analysis is Process-oriented. But in this research, because of the fundamental characteristic of the Actor-oriented rhetoric on the Japanese side of Japanese wartime discourse (Iwamoto 1995), and for the sake of simplicity, I have restricted my analysis to the transitive interpretation.

Stubbs (1994) discusses how the insight into Ergative analysis can be illuminating in the ideological interpretation of texts; according to Stubbs, the Ergative constructions are extensively used in texts to obscure the causal relationship between the actors and those affected by events.

5. First-order entities are 'discrete, physical objects'. Second-order entities are 'events, processes, states-of-affairs, etc., which are located in time and space, and which in English, are said to occur or take place, rather than to exist'. Third-order entities are such abstract entities as propositions, reasons, theorems, etc., which are outside space-time (Lyons 1977: 442-443).

6. As 'ideational' refers to the interpretation and organization of experience (Halliday 1994: 179), 'ideational metaphor' refers to how experience is metaphorically construed (see, especially, Martin 1993: 138-140, 327-329, Halliday 1994: 342-353).

7. '*Attribute*' means a quality ascribed to an entity in question (Halliday 1994: 120). See section 2.4 for discussion of how '*Attribute*' is exploited in the context of war propaganda.

8. A GROUP means 'group of words'; Halliday distinguishes GROUP and PHRASE saying that 'whereas a group is an expansion of a word, a phrase is a contraction of a clause' (1994: 180). (See Halliday 1994: 179-180, 213 for further discussion).

9. Simpson (1993) provides an explanation based on Transitive - Ergative interpretation of how the construction 'X (+ human) died' represents an event which is agentless and out of human control relating to the discourse of ideology in the news coverage.

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BASING DISCUSSION CLASSES ON LEARNERS' QUESTIONS: AN EXPERIMENT IN (NON-)COURSE DESIGN

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Abstract

In this paper I present a case study of an innovative class in an English for Academic Purposes context. What made this 'non-course' unusual was that spontaneous topics raised by the learners took the place of a pre-planned syllabus. I describe the audience and rationale for the class, analyse the topics the learners chose, and report their positive evaluation of this unfamiliar approach. Finally I outline areas for future research and development.

1. Introduction

Since 1980 IALS has run the University of Edinburgh's English Language Testing and Tuition (ELTT) programme for matriculated students taking taught or research degrees. Until the academic year 1994-95 we offered seven in-session courses, whose sequence and timing were designed principally to meet the academic language needs of students on one-year Master's courses, who make up the bulk of ELTT enrolments. We concentrated most of their English tuition into four Autumn Term courses (in listening, reading, speaking and grammar) and an intensive Christmas/New Year vacation course in writing academic papers.

The content and timing of these courses suited the majority of students, but raised a particular problem for the small number of postgraduates who join the University at the start of the second term in January: neither of the two remaining ELTT courses (in writing examination answers, and in thesis writing for second-year students) was appropriate for newly arrived research students. Every January we received a number of requests to help such students over the early part of their studies at Edinburgh. Their anxiety was increased by a feeling that they had 'missed out', not only on ELTT Courses 1-5 but also on the general induction activities for new students in the Autumn Term, such as Freshers' Week.

The alternatives open to us when dealing with these requests were to recommend students to use our self-access centre (especially if they wanted to work on listening), to provide them with dedicated IALS materials on the independent learning of English (Anderson and Lynch 1994), and/or to suggest they came back in October to join the next year's ELTT programme. Although each of these options helped to some extent, it was clear that some students went away disappointed that we had not met their expectations by giving them a place on a language course there and then.

A more specific gap in the ELTT programme was that the second term did not include a course with a focus on speaking. The solitary nature of Ph.D. work under the British system means that many first-year research students - and not only those for whom English is a second/foreign language - become isolated from staff and other students in their departments. We had received suggestions from research students and their supervisors that we should run a second-term course in oral communication for those who had not been able to get enough practice in conversation during their first term of study.

In response to these perceived problems, we decided to offer a new ELTT course in speaking in January-March 1995. This paper outlines the thinking behind its design, in particular the role of its subject matter, and assesses the evidence that the course met the participants' own requirements.

2. Course design: practice and theory

The process of designing any new course includes decisions about appropriate content. The term 'content' can be defined from various perspectives - among them grammatical, lexical, functional and procedural (Nunan 1988). Whichever perspective is adopted, the course designer faces decisions of selection and prioritisation. These are difficult enough, but the process is made more complex in a teaching situation where

some learners have already taken a number of previous courses and may well have covered some of the content, however defined, that the new course might deal with. This was the case with the new ELTT course. Some students might have attended as many as three terms of full-time tuition in the IALS General English programme, or one of our pre-sessional summer courses, before starting their degree courses. Others might have taken earlier parts of the ELTT programme.

One way of establishing what is appropriate content for a particular group of learners is to carry out a needs analysis but, as Bloor and Bloor (1988) point out, learners' objective needs do not necessarily coincide with their subjective wants. In some situations, it may be possible to negotiate the syllabus with the learners; indeed, Bloor and Bloor argue that an in-session English for Academic Purposes course (such as this one) is especially well-suited to such negotiation, since the learners share relatively similar experiences of life and language and the courses tend to be free of external constraints such as examination syllabuses.

Syllabus negotiation certainly has its attractions. However, a major obstacle in this case was that the new course would be catering for two types of student with rather different experiences and, probably, needs: (1) the late-matriculating research students, for whom this would be their first English course at Edinburgh, and (2) students who had been at Edinburgh since the beginning of the first term and who had a particular need to improve their spoken English. These different configurations of circumstance would probably mean that the two groups would have different learning priorities. However, it might be possible to harness individuals' interests in different topics in a way that would drive communicative use of the language. Experience suggested that the newly-arrived research students would have a great deal of practical questions (How, Where, When..) that could be answered by the 'old hands' and so form the basis for real content learning. I was aware that this approach carried a risk: the continuing students might not be sympathetic if the course seemed to be skewed towards the interests of the other group. Nunan (1988), writing about a theme-based English course in Australia, has reported that 'many learners are confused by content-oriented courses, thinking they have strayed into a settlement rather than a language programme' (Nunan 1988: 49).

Nevertheless, I felt it was worthwhile pursuing the goal of using a topic-based approach to the course. Apart from these local and practical arguments in favour of topic, there were two more general arguments for regarding real-world topics as a key element in course design. Firstly there is the well-established evidence from cognitive psychology (e.g. Stevick 1976) that new language items are best retained in long-term memory when the learner is actively engaged with the learning material and has some form of personal investment in the outcome.

Secondly, classroom SLA research suggests that in addition to active involvement in what is being talked about, language learners need 'abundant opportunities to control the topic of conversation and self-initiate in class ' (Johnson 1995: 85). This view is derived in particular from studies of negotiation of meaning in native-nonnative discourse which highlight the role of topic management (see, for example, the recent survey by Pica 1994). The term *management* here covers 'the participants' right to choose the topic and the way the topics are developed, and to choose how long the conversation should continue... the basic freedom to start, maintain, direct and end a conversation without conforming to a script, and without the intervention of a third party' (Bygate 1987: 36).

These two arguments were brought together in an early study by Allwright (1980), who argued that episodes of classroom interaction where the learners manage to talk (or get the teacher to talk) about their topics appeared to be more interesting (more involving, more real) than when the teacher maintained control of the subject matter. From observing a university-level ESL class at work, Allwright noticed that one learner, referred to as 'Igor', was 'probably more interested in contributing whenever the topic got away from the target language or the pedagogy itself' (ibid: 175). The situation in the class appeared to be one of 'a teacher patiently fostering real communication although it means digressing from the vocabulary work on her plan, and a learner apparently keen to establish the digression but not following it through to a particularly satisfactory solution' (1980: 185).

In the light of the various practical and theoretical issues sketched above, I decided that the new ELTT conversation classes should aim minimally to allow learners free choice over what they talked about and, if

possible, how long they wished to talk about it. It should also, in Allwright's terms, provide a platform for both 'real communication' and 'satisfactory solutions' to the issues discussed.

3. An experimental (non-)course: the Discussion Group

3.1 Design

I started from the assumption that everyone coming to the course would be interested in something, but not necessarily the same things, and that my job as designer and teacher was to find a way of giving them the chance to discuss whatever that something was. This seemed to me to be incompatible with the notion of a syllabus (whether imposed or negotiated); instead I would leave the choice of topics entirely to the students and ask them to announce their topic at the start of each session. This meant that the content would be 'individualised', but only in the sense that each learner contributed one topic to the pool; it would also be spontaneous, with the learners providing an off-the-cuff list of subjects, comprising whatever interested them that afternoon. As teacher, I would provide a framework (see Figure 1) within which each person could nominate a topic, talk about it with other learners, and then get feedback from me.

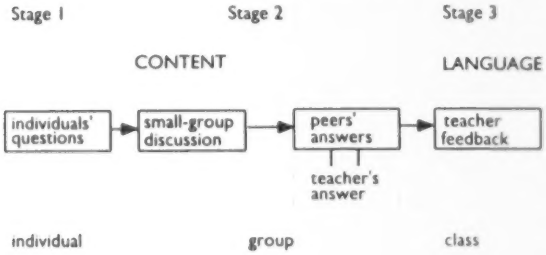

Fig.1 Discussion Group framework

The two parts of the name 'Discussion Group' were intended (1) to make clear that the focus would be on speaking and (2) to emphasise that this would not be a 'course', in the conventional sense of a series of lessons delivering a pre-planned syllabus. The advance information sent out to prospective participants explained how the Discussion Group might meet the needs of the two types of student described in section 1:

Course 6 - Discussion Group (10 sessions: 4.30-6.00 p.m. Tuesdays)
This weekly session has two aims: (1) 'trouble shooting' - allowing you to discuss any problems affecting your academic studies and (2) informal practice in conversational English. Unlike the other ELTT courses, it runs on a 'drop-in' basis and you need not attend all 10 sessions. *The discussion group should be particularly useful for graduating students who arrive too late to participate in Courses 1-5.*

3.2 Procedure

Stage 1: Questions and grouping

At the beginning of each class the students received a question sheet (see Appendix A), which asked them to write a question they wanted an answer to during that session. It could be about anything - grammar, politics, academic regulations, etc. The only criterion that I asked them to apply in selecting their topic was that it had to be something which they genuinely wanted or needed an answer to.

Once everyone had completed their sheets, I took in the 'top copy' of their question (the upper part of Appendix A) and read them through. I then grouped the learners in threes and fours, keeping apart those with the same first language and trying to ensure a mixture of levels in each group. This first stage of the class generally took 10-15 minutes.

Stage 2 - Discussion (and monitoring)

The groups then worked in parallel for the next 45 minutes or so, discussing the questions raised by their partners. As they talked, I moved from group to group, 'hovering' in the way that has become traditional for teachers monitoring learners' production in group tasks. I made notes of anything I thought might be worth commenting on at Stage 3 - grammatical errors, stylistic inappropriacies, apparent lexical gaps, and so on. If during group work a learner asked me for help with a current problem of self-expression, I gave it; but I tried not to allow my response to turn into an extended teaching episode.

Stage 3 - Feedback

The final 30 minutes were set aside for comments on their discussion. These were primarily related to language points; I mentioned points I had noted during the group work and I asked the learners themselves to report on points they remembered having had difficulty with either in listening or speaking.

I also provided two other sorts of content response where I felt it was appropriate. Firstly, when I noticed that a student appeared not to have received a 'satisfactory solution' from their peers, I gave them an answer (sometimes *the* answer, if it was a factual question) either by speaking to the student individually towards the end of Stage 2, or by including it in my comments at Stage 3. Secondly, I gave out material at Stage 3 in response to some questions if I had suitable material available. Table 1 shows the balance between these types of content response; note that these were in addition to language feedback at Stage 3 (and any responses to students' requests for language help at Stage 2).

Table 1. Responding to the content of students' questions

	Stage 2	Stage 3	
week	talked to the individual	commented to the class	provided materials
1	-	-	3
2	1	3	2
3	-	2	1
4	1	2	-
6	3	1	1
7	-	-	1
8	-	-	1
9	-	1	1
	5	9	10

Over the term a total of 21 students attended the course, with an weekly attendance of nine students. The fact that I dealt with only five topics on an individual basis shows that, as far as I could judge, the learners were getting satisfactory answers to their questions via group discussion.

3.3 Mid-course evaluation

At the halfway point in the term I surprised the students by devoting session 5 to an evaluation of the first four weeks. They worked through a series of evaluation tasks (reproduced as Appendix B), the aim of which was to see whether the consumers' views suggested I should modify or replace any of the Discussion Group

elements in the second half of the term. Given the experimental nature of the classes, I was prepared to switch to using prepared materials and a more teacher-fronted method if a majority in the class rejected the non-course approach I had adopted.

The first evaluation task asked the students to analyse the topics covered in the first four weeks. Through discussion we came up with six categories, illustrated below with actual questions from sessions 1-4:

English language - *What is the difference between 'night' and 'evening'? What is the best answer to 'Are you sure?' when I have rejected an offer?*

Language learning - *How can I improve my listening skills in English? What is the best way to increase vocabulary?*

Academic study - *What are the library databases for finding references? What is a good essay like?*

Living in Edinburgh - *What is the best way to find flatmates? Where can I buy a second-hand bike?*

British culture - *What is Scottish devolution? Do you think British people are really polite?*

The wider world - *Can you imagine moving to the country permanently? A Kenyan student told me he gets hungry quicker here and eats four times a day: is it true that the cold weather affects our body functions?*

In the second evaluation task the students had to look for any changes in the pattern of topics over the four weeks; the purpose of this task was not to attempt a rigorous analysis of the topics, but to remind the learners of the potential range of subjects they could raise in the sessions. From 'eyeballing' the topic list, they thought there was some evidence of a shift after week 2 towards the most general category ('wider world') and away from language learning strategies. Table 2 (drawn up after the evaluation session) confirms that apparent shift of interest.

Table 2. **Questions in weeks 1-4, by topic category**

week	English language	language learning	academic context	living in Edinburgh	British culture	wider world	**TOTAL**
1	2	2	1	2	-	2	**9**
2	3	4	1	2	2	2	**14**
3	2	1	1	2	1	7	**14**
4	3	-	-	2	2	7	**14**
(%)	**10** (20)	**7** (14)	**3** (6)	**8** (16)	**5** (10)	**18** (35)	**51**

For evaluation task 3 the students completed two simple statements to sum up their overall positive and negative feelings about the sessions so far: the first was *'What I like about the Discussion Group is ...'* and the second *'I think it would be better if ...'* Their responses are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Learners' responses to Evaluation Task 3

What I like about the Discussion Group is...
- it is informal / natural (2 responses) - the chance to get information about... English (4), British culture (2), other cultures (3) - the good method - the opportunity to meet different people (3) - that we can discuss what we want (3) - it is not boring

- we can speak freely
- we can talk without worrying about grammatical correctness (3)
- the tips and language points raised at the end by the teacher (2)
- the chance to improve oral skills
- I can improve my listening

I think it would be better if...

- the group were more homogeneous (although that allows us to get used to different accents)
- we were corrected more (3)
- we could be grouped by the subjects we want to discuss
- the class were more frequent
- the questions were more substantial
- we spent less time talking to each other and more time talking to the teacher
- we sometimes discussed a specific topic so the teacher could give us vocabulary for it (2)
- we had a short introduction with the structures that you can use
- we had more time to express our opinion
- I cannot think of anything (maybe everything is just perfect)

Before session 6 I was able to read through the students' written comments and the notes I had made on their group discussions (Tasks 3 and 4). Overall, there were no obvious signs of general dissatisfaction with format and method. I began session 6 by discussing two of the suggested improvements: topic-based grouping and correction. We accepted the suggestion that they - rather than I - should decide on the grouping and that groups should be based on topic, instead of level and first language.

The second issue we discussed was correction. I gave a brief summary of the findings of research into the effectiveness of teachers' correction of learners' spoken errors; I said there was limited evidence that adult learners made short-term gains in accuracy, and that these were more likely in the area of grammar than in pronunciation.

I then talked more generally about the importance of their 'noticing the gap' (Schmidt 1990) for themselves; I used a classroom transcript of communicative group work (Lynch 1996: 114) to show the potential opportunities for learners to pick up information about gaps in their own performance.

Finally, I offered to provide more intensive correction for the three students who had said they wanted it. We agreed that the best way to do that would be for them to form a separate 'correction' group for the Stage 2 discussion work. (In fact, after one session's experience of being corrected in the way they had requested, the three learners asked to be reintegrated with the rest of the class!)

3.4 Second half of the term

Apart from these adjustments to grouping, the procedure in sessions 6-9 was the same as in the first half of the term. At the final session I again asked the participants to evaluate their experience in the Discussion Group, using similar evaluation tasks to those from session 5, but as a basis for oral discussion rather than written comments.

Among other things, they were able to compare the topics covered in the first and second halves of the term, shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Questions in weeks 1-4 and 6-9, by topic area

week	English language	language learning	academic study	living in Edinburgh	British culture	wider world	TOTAL
1	2	2	1	2	-	2	**9**
2	3	4	1	2	2	2	**14**
3	2	1	1	2	1	7	**14**
4	3	-	-	2	2	7	**14**
(%)	**10** (20)	**7** (14)	**3** (6)	**8** (16)	**5** (10)	**18** (35)	**51**
6	2	1	1	1	3	1	**9**
7	-	3	1	1	1	3	**9**
8	2	1	-	1	1	1	**6**
9	-	3	-	-	1	2	**6**
	4 (13)	**8** (27)	**2** (7)	**3** (10)	**6** (20)	**7** (23)	**30**
TOTAL	**14** (17)	**15** (19)	**5** (6)	**11** (14)	**11** (14)	**25** (31)	**81**

There seemed to be no clear pattern of change over the term. The apparent shifts in popularity of 'language learning' and 'wider world' that we had noted at the mid-course session were reversed in sessions 6-9, with 'language learning' emerging as the most popular topic category in the second half of the term. This suggests that some students were looking beyond the Discussion Group and thinking about how they might continue their language progress independently. However, with these relatively small numbers of participants, we inevitably have no more than a general impression of the range of things that interested them. As we will see in section 4, there was variation both between individuals and also within the same individual in different weeks.

My notes from the evaluation session show that the subjects the learners then raised included ways of making classroom correction more effective, and the relative importance for speaking of good pronunciation and sound grammar and vocabulary. At the end of the session I gave them some 'independent learning' materials on the improvement of speaking (Anderson and Lynch 1994).

4. Discussion

4.1 Participants' response

It is not possible - nor was it my intention - to measure the success or otherwise of this innovation in quantitative terms. I was concerned more with the way a class based on individuals' topics would be perceived. For my purposes, the most appropriate criteria for judging success were that the participants should feel that (1) they had got an answer to the questions they had raised and (2) they had practised their spoken English in doing so. The written evaluations at the mid-course questionnaire and other informal comments, (e.g. 'This is the most English I have spoken in 10 months!' was one after session 1), suggest that the course did meet most learners' wants.

One way of assessing the popularity of a course is to look at the attendance figures. Of course, they offer only a rough-and-ready guide to a course's success - although Bloor and Bloor (1988) suggest that for optional in-session EAP courses like this one, attendance may actually be a reasonable measure of how appropriate the participants feel the tuition is for them.

The membership of the class changed from week to week, as envisaged at the planning stage: a total of 21 people came to at least one session. The attendance figures (see the right-hand column in Table 4) show that numbers dropped in the second half of the term. This could have been because some students were dissatisfied, although there is no clear evidence from the written comments at the mid-course session that this

was the case. A more positive reason was the one that a number of the students themselves gave, namely that in the second half of the term they were preparing for examinations and projects.

We should bear in mind that the Discussion Group was intended to meet the needs of two target groups of students - late-matriculating research students and those with particularly weak spoken English. In fact, only four of the 21 participants fell into those two categories: two late-matriculating research students, a third who had been unable to come to ELTT Courses 1-5, and a fourth who had been advised by her supervisor to continue work on her spoken English. The other participants were students who had also taken one or more of the first-term courses ELTT 1-5 and had decided to come to the Discussion Group despite relatively high overall TEAM scores. Some had enrolled for the class when they matriculated; others came to the class having heard about it from other students in their department.

It is noticeable that the four learners in the target categories formed a 'hard core' of regular attenders who came to all the sessions available to them, so there is some reason for concluding that the sessions met the perceived needs or wants of the students for whom it was primarily intended.

The attendance figures also suggest that six students seem to have 'sampled' the course for one or two sessions and then left (before the mid-course evaluation). Five of the six were from East Asia; perhaps their expectations conflicted with what the Discussion Group offered. For example, Luk (1994) reported that Chinese-speaking students taking an earlier ELTT speaking course were generally critical of communicative speaking tasks, which they summed up as 'just talking' or 'games'. It could be that this reaction would be found among learners from other East Asian countries influenced by Confucian educational values.

4.2 Topic choice

The individual profiles of topics that the regular attenders raised give some insight into their motivations in joining the Discussion Group. The questions asked by student KTa reflected the particular concerns of a newly arrived research student:

KTa

2 How to improve my English listening?
3 Should I buy a TV with teletext?
4 What's the best primary school in Edinburgh?
6 I started at the university in January. How can I attend classes in the autumn?
7 I can't clearly pronounce some sounds. How can I improve that?
8 How to make friends with British people?
9 What is the most effective method to improve my pronunciation?

KTa was clearly preoccupied with ways of improving his English, since he had not been able to take the five ELTT courses in the first term; like many other East Asian students, he was particularly worried by his relative weakness in oral skills. (In fact, pronunciation still looms large in his concerns about his English: at the time of writing, almost a year after he raised these questions in the Discussion Group, he is asking very much the same questions in the 1995-96 ELTT 2 Speaking course). We can see that KTa's questions amounted to *requests for advice*, including the one in session 4 about a suitable primary school for his children. In general, it looks as if his view of the Discussion Group coincided with the first aim set out in the course description, that of trouble-shooting, and that he valued the course as a means of getting the procedural, 'how to' knowledge that he required to settle in at Edinburgh.

On the other hand, ISp (a European M.Sc. student) was drawn to the Discussion Group primarily because of its other stated aim, that of providing practice in conversation. She was recommended to take the course by her supervisor, although she had in fact already enrolled on the course at the start of the academic year. Her topic profile gives quite a different picture of a learner's perception of the class:

Student ISp

2 Why did you come to Edinburgh?
3 What do you like to do in your free time?
4 What is the thing you like most about your country?
6 Do you think that British people are really polite?
7 In which historical period would you like to have lived?
8 What do you think about modern art?
9 What will you do during the holiday in April?

Unlike KTa, what seemed to interest ISp were topics that would enable her to hear about other people's lives; notice that all her questions explicitly involved the addressee ('you'), in contrast to KTa's list, which focussed on 'I/my'. We might say that ISp's questions represent *invitations to interact*.

So ISp and KTa seem to be archetypes of the two target groups we had in mind when setting up the Discussion Group, judging by the way they concentrated on just one or two topic categories. The other regular participants in the class came with a broader agenda and asked questions across a wider range of categories. For example, student UFi's list of topics was as follows:

Student UFi

1 What is a good essay like?
2 What is specifically Scottish about Edinburgh life?
3 What is the difference between *night* and *evening*?
4 What topics do the British like to talking about, apart from the weather?
6 What is Valentine's Day about?
7 What do you think are the benefits of asking a non-teacher native speaker to correct your writing?
8 What is *made* and what is *done*?
9 What are the possibilities of taking part in a language class in the third term and what would it cost?

There we have examples of all the topic categories except the 'wider world'. Questions 3 and 8 were about English, dealing with pairs of terms for which UFi found no equivalent distinction in her own language. Questions 2, 4 and 6 show that she was interested - apparently more than ISp and certainly more than KTa - in finding out about the host culture, or at least in using that as a means to language practice and improvement. Unlike either of the other regulars, UFi showed a concern with one particular aspect of her current academic work (questions 1 and 7). The fact that she chose to ask for advice on writing could reflect a difference between her circumstances and those of the other two learners: ISp had taken the ELTT grammar and writing courses, and KTa had not yet had to present any written work to his supervisor. This was UFi's first opportunity to take part in ELTT.

Of course the differences among these learners' topics (and the others not analysed here) may be due to personality factors, as much as to any differences in their current needs. However, the point to stress here is that the design of the Discussion Group allowed the opportunity for these complementary topics - KTa's focus on the cognitive and linguistic, and ISp's with the affective and the interpersonal - to find expression through the freedom of choice the learners had over the subject matter at each session.

5. Future directions

At the time of writing we are about to start the Discussion Group for the 1995-6 ELTT programme and it will be interesting to see whether it is received as positively by this year's participants as this experimental version. In this paper I have concentrated on the content dimension of the Discussion Group; I have not discussed in any detail issues of language, relating to learner performance or teacher feedback. However, the session notes I made from January to March 1995 suggest three areas to follow up in the coming term.

Firstly, it would be useful to tape-record and study the negotiation process by which the learners in a discussion group actually 'manage' their chosen topics. My notes show that some students had only rudimentary means of expressing their intention to open or close a topic, or to move from one topic to the next: *'That's enough - now you'* was one example I noted down during session 3. Recording group performances would allow us to assess learners' ability to handle this aspect of discourse competence in English, and to devise appropriate learning materials if necessary.

Secondly, I would like to develop better techniques for helping to draw learners' attention to their own and others' errors, i.e. to 'notice the gap'. In my notes on session 2 I recorded my surprise at finding that when I asked the students at Stage 3 to recall any of their own expressions that they had noticed their listeners having problems understanding, not a single person was able (or willing) to do so. So in session 3 I asked them before they started Stage 2 to listen out for such problems in their discussion and to make a note of them. Every group was able to come up with at least one example, some indicating a speaker problem (e.g. pronunciation), others a listener problem (such as unfamiliarity with the word used by the speaker).

This suggests that it may be possible to 'prime' students with some form of monitoring task that will raise awareness of their own communicative effectiveness and to diagnose (and remedy?) the sources of comprehension problems. This should help to show some learners, such as the East Asians who left last year's Discussion Group before the middle of the term, that learner-led communicative tasks are a valuable means of getting feedback on their language performance.

A third potential issue for further investigation is the effect of teaching expressions relevant to certain genres of discussion. What I have in mind here is not the thematically based word lists that two students mentioned at the mid-course evaluation, but related sets of expressions appropriate to particular types of interaction: for example, for giving advice (in answering a *'What's the best way to...'* question), for introducing an anecdote or example (in a *'Do you think the British are...'* discussion), or for expressing doubt (in discussing a *'What's the difference between...'* language point).

For example, in session 4 last year I noted that, when I asked the class to think of ways of making a suggestion without using the words 'suggest' and 'suggestion', only two of the 14 students were able to. It seemed that the sort of common unmarked expressions that they must have heard native speakers use (such as *'If I were you...'* and *'Why don't you...'*) had passed them by unnoticed. Again, the Discussion Group could include feedback to help learners notice new items in communicative use.

6. Conclusion

The Discussion Group offers a practical solution, from the teacher's point of view, to the problem of what has been called the 'anarchy of expectations' (Drobnic 1978: 70, cited in Bloor and Bloor 1988) - the different wants and needs represented in even quite a small group of relatively similar individuals. The Discussion Group framework gives priority to individual choice of topic; in this sense it could be thought to reflect the recent movement towards learner autonomy and independence, and towards helping learners to take responsibility for their learning. However, the Discussion Group illustrates neither learner autonomy nor independence, but rather the devolution of responsibility (for topic) from teacher to learner.

The aim of the framework is to 'legitimise' - and even to require - the type of learner input that teachers often stigmatise in the language classroom because it is off-the-point, i.e. learner talk about what currently puzzles or concerns or annoys them. From the evidence I have discussed here, the first Discussion Group appears to have been broadly successful. I hope that the future work I have outlined here will build on this innovation within the ELTT programme, to help learners to increase the confidence that comes from meaningful practice, but also to enhance the competence that comes from 'noticing' the forms of language used in the course of topical communication.

Acknowledgment

I am very grateful to Joan Maclean and Eric Glendinning for their comments on an earlier version of this paper, and to Meriel Bloor of the University of Warwick for her help in tracing the bibliographic details of Drobnic (1978).

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APPENDIX A

ELTT 6: TODAY'S QUESTION

Each week you can suggest ONE question/problem to which you would like an answer/solution. It will come from either the other members of your group or from the tutor.

Name: My question:
I am asking the question because...

.....tear .....here.....

Now please make a second copy of the question here, for you to keep:

My question:

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APPENDIX B

DISCUSSION GROUP session 5

Today marks the halfway point in this Discussion Group and I would like us to take stock of what we have done so far. In particular, I will be asking if you have suggestions for any improvements we might make to the content or format of the Discussion Group.

Task 1

On the yellow sheets you will find a compilation of all the questions raised during the previous four weeks. Look through them and see if you are able to divide the questions/issues into different *categories*.

Task 2

When you have discussed Task 1, see whether you can identify any changes over the four weeks in the *pattern* of questions asked.

Task 3

Without consulting the other students at your table, fill in the blue **Comment Sheet**. When you have completed it, compare and discuss your individual views.

Task 4

Look back to the questions which you yourself asked in earlier sessions. Are there any to which you feel you did not get a satisfactory answer then? If so, ask your colleagues to tell you what they think or know about the point you raised.

Task 5

Discuss any other previous questions (asked by other people) that particularly interest the members of your group.

Tony Lynch 7 Feb 1995

PARTICIPANT ACTION PLANS AND THE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS' COURSES

Ian McGrath (IALS)

Abstract

Courses are intended - and expected - to bring about change in participants. What is distinctive about courses for teachers is that insofar as these changes are behavioural - related to skills development and classroom practice - they can only be satisfactorily observed once the course is over. If we are to assess the effectiveness of teachers' courses in these terms, follow-up is therefore necessary. The paper describes a study in which one specific form of follow-up, the action plan, was used, and offers an evaluation of its potential as a programme evaluation instrument.

1. Introduction

Teacher trainers, like any other teachers, are change agents. That is, they are expected to bring about changes in those they teach: changes in terms of knowledge or skill, awareness or attitude. It may be possible to observe certain types of change during a course (and tests and examinations are designed to do just this). However, some of the changes that trainers might wish to see taking place in teachers relate to teaching practices - to things being done which were not done before the course or to things being done better - and although it may be possible to observe an increase in skill during a course (e.g. as a result of microteaching practice) there is no guarantee that this will carry over to the individual's own teaching context or that new ideas will be implemented.

Despite what would seem to be a logical imperative, a recent survey of 31 UK institutions offering a total of 110 in-service courses for language teachers (McGrath, forthcoming) found very little evidence of systematic attempts to carry out post-course evaluation. There are no doubt a number of reasons for this. Alderson (1985), for instance, refers to logistic, methodological and interpretational difficulties. Nevertheless, given the importance of establishing longer-term effects, such difficulties should not deter us from at least trying to carry out some form of post-course evaluation - and exploring methods of doing so.

Evidence from the survey referred to above suggests that the institutions who attempt post-course evaluation tend to obtain their data in one or more of the following ways: through questionnaires sent to participants some months after the end of the course; from sponsors' reports on the participants or containing feedback from the participants; and from visits to the participants' home country and interviews, group discussion and observation there. In one rare account from a different context, trainers carried out follow-up visits to a sample of participants during which they not only videorecorded classes but also attempted to obtain a measure of comparison by interviewing and recording classes of participants' colleagues (Ward, Barr, Chai, Hua, Kong and Lu 1995).

A rather different approach is described by Alderson (op.cit.). Alderson's 'implementation plan' requires participants on a 10-week course to complete 'a personal plan of action for further ... curriculum development' (1985: 148). This is followed up some months later. Estaire (1993) indicates how action plans can be utilised during a course to encourage and assess take-up from specific sessions. Neither provides a documented account of results.

What follows is a description of a systematic attempt to use participant action plans in programme evaluation and a consideration of the possible benefits and limitations of this procedure.

2. The Context

In October 1994, 15 teachers and teacher-trainers from Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein attended a 2-week tailor-made refresher course at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh. There

was a good mix of males (6) and females (9) and all were very experienced, the average age being about 40. The basic timetable consisted of 20 x 1½-hour sessions, taught in the mornings. There were workshops on language through literature, drama activities for ELT, teaching mixed levels and developing learning independence; three sessions on the methodology of in-service training; culturally-oriented lectures; workshops on language awareness (e.g. political correctness); and a session on self-evaluation. Afternoons were taken up by self-directed project work (prepared for and followed up in morning sessions), optional lectures, and a visit to Moray House Institute of Education. Although I was the Course Director and handled 14 of the 20 morning slots, 6 other staff were involved, each contributing one lecture or workshop.

I will restrict myself to these few brief details because the paper is not so much concerned with the course itself as with the way in which it was evaluated.

3. The Study

3.1 Objectives

The course was evaluated formally primarily by means of what will be referred to as participant action plans (see 3.2, below). This was the first time that I had used action plans for evaluative purposes, and the intention was not only to obtain participant feedback on the course but also to assess the potential contribution to programme evaluation of this particular data collection instrument.

3.2 The action plan

The idea of action plans was introduced to participants on the last day of the course. They were first taken through page 1 of the handout (below) and asked to complete page 2. The completed forms were then photocopied and the originals given back to the participants. They were told that in two or three months' time they would be asked to report on their progress towards the objectives they had formulated for the action plan.

ACTION PLANS

What is an action plan ?

It's basically a set of resolutions: what you will DO as a result of an experience, in this case a course. DOING may mean discussing with colleagues some of the ideas you've been exposed to; trying out something new in the classroom; reading; or something else. You decide what actions you want to take.

Why make an action plan ?

An action plan is a kind of bridge between theory and practice or idea and implementation. Before you can make an action plan, you will need to go through a process of review and evaluation. It goes without saying that this is valuable in itself, but if it then leads to concrete decisions about what you will DO, there is even more chance that you will apply something of what you have learned.

What are the criteria for an action plan ?

Good action plans distinguish clearly between short- and long-term goals. The goals are specified in concrete terms, and they are realisable.

Now turn over the page and try to formulate at least three concrete, realisable goals which derive in some way from your experience in Edinburgh.

Action plan, page 1: briefing notes

MY ACTION PLAN

I will definitely ...

1.

2.

3.

I also hope to ...

4.

5.

6.

NAME ..... DATE .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

Action plan, page 2: form for completion

3.3 Follow-up 1

A follow-up letter was sent out in December, some two months after the end of the course (Appendix 1). It combined Christmas/New Year greetings with an enquiry concerning progress with the points in the individual's action plan, a copy of which was enclosed with the letter. The letter crossed with a handful of seasonal greetings from Germany. No reference was made in any of these to the action plan.

In early February I received one letter responding directly to the issues raised in mine, and waited for the others.

By the third week in February I was feeling somewhat despondent and mentioned this to one of my colleagues. He suggested a number of reasons for participants' failure to reply (e.g. the course had been very short; some effects may only manifest themselves after a considerable period of time, if at all; participants might be embarrassed if they had nothing to report). The conversation made me think. It also prompted me to write another standard letter, at the end of February.

3.4 Follow-up 2

In the second letter (Appendix 2) I summarised the conversation with my colleague and included an extract from the one reply I had received. Slightly personalised versions of the standard letter were sent to the people who had written to me at Christmas. I also wrote back to the one participant who had replied to my letter.

My second attempt produced five replies within two weeks or so (four letters and one card, the latter promising a fuller response in due course - which never actually arrived). Only two of these were from

people who had written to me at Christmas. One of my letters came back: 'return to sender, address unknown'. The number of the house turned out to have been wrong, the letter was sent out again, and a faxed reply was received almost immediately. By the end of March, three more responses had arrived and one more, written during the Easter holidays, at the end of April. This gave me a total of ten, two-thirds of the group.

3.5 Follow-up 3

What else could I do to get the others to reply? Well, I could have written another letter or I could have telephoned, but both of these approaches seemed rather too pushy.

I decided on a picture postcard: a photo of Edinburgh on one side and "Hope to hear from you some time!" on the other. The five postcards went out in late June, just before the summer holidays. I received one response - also on a postcard - in early November, roughly a year after the end of the course and ten months after the first follow-up.

4. Data Analysis

The data thus fell into two categories: the 15 action plans, and the 11 responses to my letters and postcard concerning the action plans. With the exception of the two postcards, responses were quite long, the majority occupying one typed page of A4, and the handwritten responses ranging from two to four pages in length.

The plans were scrutinised for specific reference to topics treated during the course; other points were also listed, grouped and categorised.

The letters and cards sent by participants in response to my letters were first analysed for the following:

- evidence that action had been taken on the action points formulated at the end of the course
- evidence of any other effects of the course.

Some respondents do refer directly and systematically to the points in their action plan; some refer to certain points but not others; and the minority write in such general terms that it is impossible to relate their comments directly to specific action points.

The quantified results related to reported action should therefore be taken as only approximations of reality and as true only for the time at which these soundings were taken. In due course, participants may decide (or be able) to pursue ideas they had not hitherto explored.

5. Results

5.1 Data Analysis Stage 1: The action plans

Topic areas had been selected (and approved by the course leader) on the assumption that they would be of interest to a well-experienced group. Nevertheless, given the variety of experience and teaching contexts within the group it was unlikely that any one topic would appeal equally to everyone, and a range of course topics figured in the action plans, as indicated in Table 1, below. Items 1-6 in the table were named timetable sessions (these constitute, in fact, all the specific methodology sessions). Item 7 makes reference to a special session on the final day which incorporated a demonstration of the Silent Way; item 8 to activities on the first day and at the start of many other sessions.

Table 1: Content areas featured in course and figuring in action plans (n = 15)

1. developing learner independence	6

2. the use of literature in language teaching	5
3. drama techniques in language teaching	5
4. teaching mixed levels	4
5. project work	3
6. self-evaluation	2
7. new approaches (incl. work with Cuisenaire rods)	2
8. ice breakers	2

It is possible that more than the numbers indicated found these sessions interesting or of some value; what the action plans indicate, however, is that at the point the course ended these particular individuals felt sufficiently stimulated to want to do something about this interest. In this sense, the action plan goes beyond the usual kind of end-of-course questionnaire which merely asks whether participants find particular sessions interesting or valuable or which sessions they have found most valuable.

Table 2, below, relates to more general or less predictable effects of the course.

Table 2: Action plan objectives related less directly to course content

1. change way of teaching/approach	4
2. use materials given	2
3. use materials collected	1
4. study books bought	1
5. share with colleagues	6
6. stay in contact with group	3
7. maintain connections with Edinburgh	2
8. pursue interest in dyslexia	2
9. pursue interest in comparing paintings and poems	1
10. teach folkdances to students	1
11. incorporate ideas in own publications	1
12. not continue to do every kind of non-teaching job	1

Objectives 1-4 differ from those in Table 1 in that, though related to pedagogical concerns, they are more general. 'Change way of teaching/approach' (1) includes both general statements such as 'be more creative' and very specific intentions, such as making use of a specific (but unspecified) technique or getting students to talk more. 'Use materials collected' (3) refers to materials collected in the course of individual project work.

The second subgroup of objectives, 5-7, are interpersonal. 'Share with colleagues' (5) points to the possible spread of ideas beyond their immediate recipients, an important consideration in the case of participants who are teachers and teacher trainers and therefore another effect that can only be evaluated some time after the course is over. 'Stay in contact with the group' (6) would seem to be one indicator of the cohesiveness of the group, which has in fact met on at least one occasion since the course.

The third subgroup, 8-12, relate to personal objectives only tangentially (if at all) related to course content. Project work (see Table 1) was an opportunity for participants to pursue existing interests (dyslexia (8) in one case, comparison of poems and paintings as teaching material (9) in another); other interests (folkdances, 10) or personal resolutions (11-12) appear to have been stimulated by the course itself.

5.2 Data Analysis Stage 2: Comparison of action plans and reports on these

Analysis of the action plans proved much more difficult than would have been the case if (a) each individual's starting point had been the same (b) they had been responding to a standard proforma.

Given these two built-in variables, the size of the total sample and the lack of information provided in several of the responses, results are numerically speaking very inconclusive.

The results are presented in the same order as those for in Table 1.

Table 3: Number of participants taking action on specific objectives related to course content

Objective	Action	
	planned	taken
• developing learner independence	6	3
• the use of literature in language teaching	5	1
• drama techniques in language teaching	5	1
• teaching mixed levels	4	0
• project work	3	0
• self-evaluation	2	1
• new approaches (incl. work with Cuisenaire rods)	2	1
• ice breakers	2	2

Table 4: Number of participants taking action on objectives less directly related to course content.

Objective	Action	
	planned	taken
• change way of teaching/approach	4	3

• use materials given	2	1
• use materials collected	1	0
• study books bought	1	0
• share with colleagues	6	1
• stay in contact with group	3	0
• maintain connections with Edinburgh	2	0
• pursue interest in dyslexia	2	1
• pursue interest in comparing paintings and poems	1	0
• teach folkdances to students	1	0
• incorporate ideas in own publications	1	1
• not continue to do every kind of non-teaching job	1	1

Based on participants' self-reports, there is then some quantitative evidence that action was taken in each of the three categories of objective. If one also draws on qualitative data - what respondents actually say in their letters - there seems reason to suppose that these figures are an under-representation of action in progress/ potential action. For instance, in relation to the teaching of mixed levels in Table 4 on which no action appears to have been taken, Respondent D writes: 'I find myself more prepared to care for the needs of the "differently gifted"'. Project work, being a general category, may have manifested itself in action in any one of a number of ways; there is certainly some overlap between this and the more personal objectives included in Table 6. Self-evaluation, similarly, is a rather general category and, in a sense, underpins the whole enterprise. Several respondents comment specifically on this:

> 'I haven't done any thorough self-evaluation though it's in the back of my head and I seem to realize the mistakes I do over and over again and to look at them more objectively' (E)
>
> 'In my own courses I'm actually just beginning to work a lot more with different forms of evaluation' (F - a trainer)
>
> 'As I knew your letter would come - I hadn't expected it as soon as this though - I had already tried to watch myself a bit more closely in my teaching behaviour' (I).

In connection with the objectives expressed in Tables 4 and 5, there are comments on postponed meetings with colleagues; there are also several interesting references to changes in teaching approach:

> 'by now I hope I have understood that I can't become an entirely new teacher within a fortnight, that this is a slow process which will take a long time, which can only be done in small steps and will perhaps never be fully completed. What I have already started to do is trying to provide phases in exercises which are less teacher-centred' (I)
>
> 'Even before the course ... terms such as learner independence ... were the rage in this part of the world. I had heard of these and read about them, even used them in my classes. Owing to your course,

however, it has become clear to me that they must play an even more dominant role than I had thought ... As a result ... I have been constantly on the look-out for ways and means to bring about more learner independence' ...[goes on to illustrate this in relation to his language classes]

'While working with probationary teachers in my seminars, too, I have given prominence to learner independence by making them draw on their considerable experience and having them discuss things amongst themselves before I feed in additional material and ideas. We find this very satisfactory' (B - a trainer)

Similarly:

'Both target groups [school pupils and trainees] showed their spontaneous appreciation of my somewhat different teaching approaches after my return to school and to the seminar.... All in all, those two weeks gave me a new impetus, which is still evident, I guess. I found out that I tend to employ more student-oriented methods now. (Motto: "Let them discover things ... I'll help them" rather than "That's the way it is. Got the message ?"). I had always thought that these methods would be rather time-consuming ... but they are not, if they are well dosed ... I think that's the secret of successful teaching - it's the mixture or better combination of the traditional (which wasn't that bad if you left out the extremes) and the new. Nothing is more harmful and demotivating than routine and patterns' (C - a trainer)

5.3 Data Analysis Stage 3: Explanations and other comments

At this stage of the analysis, two questions arose:

1. Why had certain action points not been implemented: was this an individual matter (were some participants simply less active than others) or was it something to do with the nature of the action point, the way this had been formulated, or the level of priority assigned to it ?

2. Why had only one person responded to the first letter? To what extent were the hypotheses expressed in the second letter correct (bad timing; longer period necessary for implementation or for effects to become apparent; unrealistic expectations concerning participants' sense of responsibility)?

5.3.1 Non-implementation of action points

Analysis of self-reported individual action (Table 7, below) indicates that the majority of participants responding to the follow-up have achieved a proportion of the objectives they set for themselves. Where they have not, this appears to have been for reasons beyond their control (e.g. postponement of meetings with colleagues); lack of opportunity (action points which relate to more distant future or syllabus areas do not lend themselves to use of specific ideas); changed awareness (realisation that planned actions were not appropriate); in some cases, personal problems also loom large.

In Table 5, below, participants responding by letter are referred to as LA, LB, etc.; those who sent postcards as PJ and PK. Column 2 indicates the number of points on which action has reportedly been taken, figures in brackets being the number of points originally formulated by each individual. Action points not referred to in the response are noted under NO REF.

Table 5: Individual implementation of action plans

	Action	No ref.	No action	Explanation/comment
LA	4 (5)	1		
LB	1 (3)	2		

LC	3 (3)			but used material his way
LD	3 (6)	2		
LE	1 (6)		1	2 meetings cancelled; 'in my mind to ...' do certain things
LF	2 (4)			remaining objectives felt to be inappropriate
LG	0 (6)	6		personal problems; also new to training
LH	2 (4)	2		
LI	2 (6)	2	2	one ref. to future plan; reality of teaching context makes implementation problematic
PJ	(2)	2		
PK	(2)	2		

A further analysis, this time of the distribution of points across the two sections of the action plan (I will definitely .../I also hope to ...) showed no pattern either in relation to the inclusion of specific, short-term points under the first section and more general, long-term objectives under the second or in relation to action actually taken. As will be clear from Table 5, most participants expressed fewer than the 'maximum' of 6 objectives; two wrote nothing under 'I also hope to ...'. For further comment on this, see **Conclusions**.

5.3.2 Non-immediate response

Several respondents mentioned how busy they had been. Sometimes the pressures appear to be a combination of the personal and professional:

> 'three lively children, a sweet old granny, a house, a garden, a dainty cat and a job don't allow much time for self-evaluation' (H)

In other cases, the pressures of work are overwhelming:

> (school, seminar [duties in connection with training course], night class, private tuition, work for a publisher, and just started a computer course) 'when your letter arrived I was up to my neck in it... I find that my usual daily routine looks as follows: getting up, WORK, feeling terribly tired, going to bed' (D)

One person had actually started to reply but ' I still wanted to add and correct something. I was afraid you might find it too superficial'. She goes on: 'I even tried to phone you to stop you worrying ... Maybe we are just worried that we can't fulfil your expectations' (H).

Another points out that it takes time to assess the nature of the impact of a course:

> 'Maybe the reason for not responding earlier could be found in the fact that you need time to find out whether your teaching approaches, behaviour, etc have really changed' (C)

See also comments 3.1-3.5 in Appendix 3.

The reports also yield other information of both a more specific and a more general nature, among which are comments on the value of the action plan itself. This, it will be recalled, was referred to specifically in the first letter, and from my point of view was the primary objective for the whole study.

5.3.3 The action plan

Three respondents commented directly on the action plan itself and a fourth on its implicit effect in getting him to evaluate more than he might have otherwise.

> 'I really am grateful for the action plan you made us fill in. It definitely helped me to be more decisive in telling people what I'm willing and what I'm no longer willing to do. Which led to the fact that two of my colleagues took over jobs I'd been doing. I realise that I have again given in to the daily routine, though' (A).

She continues:

> 'My answer may be too late for your purposes, I'm afraid, but for me it turns out to be just in time. Evidently it is worth looking at one's action plans from time to time.'

The second writes:

> 'I liked the idea of the action plan because it forces you to make your ideas more obliging (?) ... [and] to ask again some weeks later if the planned action has already taken place or why it hasn't' (F)

And the third wonders whether it might not be a good idea to repeat the process a year on:

> As a short-term review, I daresay, my way of approaching subjects both with my students and trainee teachers has changed considerably ... Whether it will remain like this has to be seen and re-examined after, say, a year or so. (I'll gladly give you another report then.)' (C)

6. Conclusion: The value of action plans

On the basis of the evidence gained from the first stage of analysis, action plans do seem to offer a feasible and economical way of gathering information that is of value to course organisers, especially as input to the design of a course for a similar group. It would be possible to draw the line at this stage, without further systematic follow-up. This would, however, leave us as ignorant as we normally are about what effects - if any - are triggered in course participants. Moreover, participants would not feel the kind of positive pressure that some mention to go on evaluating themselves.

One of the strongest impressions left by reading participants' responses to the follow-up is that the pressures on teachers/trainers are such that although they may be able to slot certain new ideas into their everyday teaching (App.3: 3.10), it may be extremely difficult for them to find the time to adapt materials or to think through a different way of doing things. Despite this, there are signs that the process of adaptation has taken place or is taking place and that, in some cases, the effects of the course may prove quite long-lasting.

These positive outcomes notwithstanding, the study has shown that to obtain the follow-up data that makes more thorough evaluation possible requires a good deal of persistence. Moreover, even when data has been obtained (and this may well be tantalisingly incomplete), the process of data-analysis is time-consuming and the findings too various to be generalisable.

On balance, the gains seem to me to be worth the effort involved. In concrete terms the gains take the form of increased awareness of what participants take from a course and the obstacles that stand in the way of implementation. In asking - as we normally do - about the success or otherwise of a course as a whole, we may be asking the wrong question; we perhaps ought to be looking more carefully at the effect on individuals in relation to their personal/professional agendas (as well as that of the course provider, and, in the case of sponsored groups, that of the sponsor). There is, in addition, the potential value to participants of

continuing contact with the providing institution. Referring to post-course questionnaires, Alderson (1985) notes that they are a sign of 'caring'. This dimension of caring on the one hand and the very individual nature of the information received from participants may mean that the action plan is probably as close as we can get to 'participant sensitive' programme evaluation.

7. Issues

Although the study suggests that participant action plans may prove a useful instrument for both evaluation and awareness-raising, it also prompts consideration of a number of issues, practical and theoretical.

1. *Importance of negotiation of action plans*: within the framework described by Alderson (1985), action plans are negotiated with participants, who are asked to predict any possible difficulties of implementation and consider how these might be overcome. The objective, as is obvious, is that the action points should be as feasible as possible, and the assumption is that this is more likely if there has been prior reflection and discussion. On short courses, when new ideas may be introduced as late as the penultimate day, it may be difficult to find an appropriate time for the kind of negotiation that might be desirable, but equally the range of choices open to participants may be more restricted and decisions may therefore prove easier. In this case, participants were simply taken through the rationale for the action plan and then left to their own devices. It was hoped that the distinction between 'I will definitely ...' and 'I hope to ...' would serve a purpose similar to that of negotiation in the Alderson model; in the event this distinction seems to have been largely ignored. The results do not suggest that this was significant.

Two modifications to the procedure adopted may be worth considering. For instance, once individuals have formulated action points in draft form, these could be discussed with others in the group. This would not only reduce the likelihood of unrealistic objectives being put forward, it would also allow for the possibility of cooperative decisions, which might make subsequent exchanges on progress more likely and follow-up more streamlined. The proforma might also be redesigned to make data analysis rather easier. One possibility is shown below (a foolscap layout would be preferable). Note that a date is required. This would encourage participants to think in terms of actions achievable in the short term; it would also be an indicator as to an appropriate point at which to follow up.

ACTION POINT	ACT BY	*Yes* (✓)	COMMENT	*No* - REASON?

Columns to the right of the 'act by' date would be completed by the participant and constitute a progress report to the evaluator.

2. *Timing of follow-up*: There are perhaps two issues here, one being the practical problem of selecting a time for follow-up which would not be obviously inappropriate (e.g. an exam or report-writing period) - the 'act by' dates would be a guide here; the other being the length of time needed for gestation, for reflection to be translated into action, if action is what is expected. Certain kinds of change may not take place for several months or even years; others (practical ideas) might be implemented immediately. This implies the need for a longitudinal study continuing well beyond the period of the study described here. In such a case, it would obviously be desirable to combine individual contact by letter with other forms of contact (e.g. a newsletter, follow-up meeting with whole group, if this is possible). Apart from fulfilling an evaluative function, such contact would encourage the exchange of experiences and might well stimulate further, new action.

3. *The value of follow-up for participants*: Does follow-up prompt action that would not otherwise take place? This particular question was not an explicit focus of the study, but there is some evidence that it may be a factor worth exploring.

4. *Reliability of self-reports and validity of this report*: In general, we do well to be a little cautious about accepting self-reports (in questionnaires, interviews or action plans) at face-value, especially when there is a possibility of loss of face for participant or tutor. In this particular case, although there is no reason to doubt that participants are telling the truth, and although nothing appears to hang on admissions that actions have not yet been taken, affective factors may still play a part. Whereas some respondents cite factors beyond their control as a reason for late replies or non-action (Appendix 3: 3.2, 3.4), 'face' may be a factor in other cases (see, e.g. H's explanation (in 5.3.2) of her delayed response) and this may have been a consideration for those participants who did not make a return.

The next step in the study will be to send this account to participants in order to ensure that it represents as accurately as possible their interpretations as well as my own. This would also be an appropriate point, obviously, to enquire what actions, if any, have been taken since the last soundings were taken and thereby gain some insight into the time required for innovations to be implemented - and their chances of taking root.

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APPENDIX 1: Letter 1

[LOGO]

[RETYPED]

December 18, 1994

Dear

This comes with the hope that all has been well since your return home and with a festive greeting:

> May your Christmas be merry
> and your New Year very ...!

Between the sleighing and the schnappsing (or the local equivalent) you might be thinking about your New Year's Resolutions. Which might lead you to think about previous good resolutions, including those that you formulated, with due care and consideration, on the last morning of the course in Edinburgh. Just in case you've forgotten what they were, but still vaguely remember being in Edinburgh (oh yes, sitting out in the garden of the Pear Tree on a balmy (?) October evening, the country dancing, the ghost walk, the pub quiz), I'm enclosing a copy of your ACTION PLAN, together with some light reading for you, your friends or your students [brochures].

People often leave courses feeling rather euphoric, and after the 24-hour-a-day course that you created for yourselves, that would have been entirely appropriate. However, the big question is whether, after this interval, you feel that the course has had any professional impact - that is, has made an appreciable difference to what you know or what you do or how you think. This is the big or broad question; the narrower one is whether you have made any progress as far as your Action Plan is concerned.

You may find it useful to spend a little time at this stage reflecting on these questions (echoes of the session on Self-Evaluation); if you could reflect on paper - and send that paper to me, that would be very helpful for my purposes in my institutional role (course evaluation and self-evaluation). I think I told you during my self-introduction at the beginning of the course that I'm doing a doctorate in the area of Evaluation (of in-service courses for teachers) and action plans are one of the evaluation measures that I deal with in the thesis, so any comments that you might wish to add on to the value or otherwise of action plans would be doubly appreciated!

I hope to hear from you - and, indeed, to see you again at some point, perhaps on your territory next time.

With best wishes,

Ian McGrath
Development Coordinator
Teacher Evaluation

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APPENDIX 2: Letter 2

[LOGO]

[RETYPED]

February 28, 1995

Dear

Please forgive another 'standard' letter.

I thought you might be interested in a conversation I had last week with one of my colleagues. I said that I feel a little disappointed that so far I've only had one response to my letter to your group asking about progress in relation to your action plans, and added that my timing had probably been wrong, that you were all too busy enjoying yourselves to pay much notice when my letter arrived - or too busy preparing for the new term.

He suggested that there might be another, quite different reason, that you all feel rather embarrassed at having little or nothing to report. Embarrassed because you feel you should have done more, or embarrassed on my account, because I might think that the course has been unsuccessful if nothing happens as a result.

He went on to point out that you were here for only two weeks. This was a very short time in which to achieve anything significant and that, in any case, the effects of educational (as opposed to training courses) may not manifest themselves in concrete terms for some time, if at all. In other words, perhaps I was expecting too much. He also implied that two weeks was too short a time in which to establish the kind of relationship that induces people to respond to requests of this kind out of a sense of loyalty or responsibility. I don't accept this point, but I have scant evidence with which to refute it.

I mentioned that I have had one response and it bears out to some extent my colleague's speculations. I'm sure the writer won't mind if a quote a few sections from the letter:

> As I know your letter would come - I hadn't expected it as soon as this, though - I had already tried to watch myself a bit more closely in my teaching behaviour, and was somewhat disappointed.
>
> ... by now I hope I have understood that I can't become an entirely new teacher within a fortnight, that this is a slow process which will take a long time, which can only be done in small steps and will perhaps never be fully completed. What I have already started to do is trying to provide phases in exercises which are less teacher-centred, and I am trying to use drama-techniques in the teaching of literature.
>
> ... upon reflection I think I profited from my course at your institute more than I thought and in a different way, being made more prepared to reflect what I'm doing and how I could change my teaching habits.

As you will have gathered, I would very much like to hear from you, to confirm or disconfirm the ideas expressed in the earlier part of this letter. My impression was that you were an unusually well motivated group. What actually happened when you got back home?

Very best wishes,

Ian McGrath

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APPENDIX 3 : Further extracts from participant responses to follow-up

Comments on non-(immediate) response:

3.1 'Now that I know I'm not the only one being delayed in response I don't feel so bad' (i.e. second letter stimulated response) (E)

3.2 'back home I am so absorbed in everyday routine and tasks that there is no time left ... The course hasn't been unsuccessful nor have I been too lazy. Teaching obligations and duties leave little or no time for extras. In my opinion it's a general deplorable state of affairs. But that won't refrain me from attending courses again as they do make an appreciable difference to me before and after the course' (E)

3.3 (problems with elderly parents) 'I try to work hard but I never have the chance to look inside me' (G)

3.4 'please don't take our non-reactions personally. Trying to understand the four reasons [reference to my second letter] you are on the right track, but there is more to it ... 'too busy enjoying ourselves' - you must be kidding! e.g. I have got to write more than 200 school-reports (1 page each!!!) twice a year. And we do individual [?] at school - fun, but an enormous amount of work. Many of us feel terribly exhausted. (J)

3.5 'I have found it hard to reflect on the impact the course in Edinburgh had on my teaching habits although I feel I profited a lot from it' (A)

Further insights into the effect of course process/ Ps' feelings during course

3.6 (led to awareness of own language difficulties) 'I forgot to keep on learning English while I was teaching' and now feels that she is reduced to the productive level of her own students; this affected her participation in the course (G)

Miscellaneous effects of the course:

3.7 (It made me) 'feel more confident that I am on the right way ... to find out that my aims of teaching are right' (G)

3.8 'the mere fact that I attended this course had a general positive effect on me and my way of teaching. It restored much of my initial enthusiasms, which had begun to slumber under years of having to teach English to children who still have difficulty in mastering their mother tongue' (H)

3.9 'All in all, I can say that ... I've spent more time to prepare tasks for the pupils which don't involve me as a teacher but as a guide and general helper' (D)

3.10 'brought a lot of good ideas back home which I eagerly put into practice without the least delay' (H)

3.11 'Personally, I profited far more from the way and skill you structured and presented your "input" than from the content itself. Surprised ?' (K)

3.12 'I have used some of the material you have given us, but I did not try to imitate you or your approaches' (C)

3.13 'profited more than I thought and in a different way, being more prepared to reflect [on] what I'm doing and how I could change my teaching habits' (I)

DEIXIS AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND READER IN THE POETRY OF EUGENIO MONTALE.

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Abstract

This article analyses the function of deixis in the poetry of Eugenio Montale, in particular 'In limine'. The main objective is to show how deixis is involved in the dynamic relationship between text and reader. A cline of contexts of situation is created by poetic discourse, from that where the reader is 'invisible eavesdropper, overhearing a conversation between others' to that in which 'the reader can [...] place himself or herself within the deictic centre' (Semino 1992:137ff) by adopting an appropriate distance towards the events that are being recounted. In Montale's 'In limine' the reader is not only an 'eavesdropper' or able to place him/herself in the deictic centre, but symbolically takes an active part in the context of communication, and becomes a necessary element for the functioning of the text.

1. Introduction

Eugenio Montale (1896-1981) is one of the major Italian poets of the 20th century. During his lifetime he worked as translator, journalist, opera and literary critic. His poetic work was written over sixty-five years and includes: *Ossi di seppia* (1925; 1928), *Occasioni* (1939), *La Bufera e altro* (1956), *Satura* (1971), *Diario del '71 e del '72* (1973), *Quaderno di quattro anni* (1977).

The constant problem presented by the Montalian texts is that of a disharmony felt by the poetic voice with the spatio-temporal dimensions in which he/she is placed (both existentially and historically) and which are felt as obstacles preventing the passage into new dimensions where the traditional concepts of space and time lose their claustrophobic significance. The Montalian voices are described by various metaphors as prisoners of spatio-temporal dimensions. In 'In limine', the poetic voice is described as like a fish in a net:[1]

Cerca una maglia rotta nella rete	(Look for a broken mesh in the net
che ci stringe, tu balza fuori, fuggi!	that grips us, leap out, and escape!)

('In limine', *Ossi di seppia*, ll. 15-16)

In 'Meriggiare pallido e assorto' the poetic voice is imprisoned by a high wall in an uncomfortably hot and hostile garden:

Meriggiare pallido e assorto	(To laze the noon pale and thoughtful
presso un rovente muro d'orto,	near to some blazing garden-wall,
ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi	to listen in the thorn-hedge and the brake
schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi.	to clattering of blackbird, rustle of snake.
[...]	[...]
E andando nel sole che abbaglia	And as you go in the dazzling sun
sentire con triste meraviglia	to feel with sad bewilderment
com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio	how all of life and its suffering
in questo seguitare una muraglia	is in this steady following
che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia	a wall with jagged bottle for its rim.)

('Meriggiare pallido e assorto', *Ossi di seppia*)

The pivot of Montale's poems becomes the search for salvation which is, in most of his lyrics, associated with the successful relationship between the speaking voice and the hearer-addressee who can, to a certain extent, be recognisable in a feminine figure, in a past or possible lover with whom the speaking voice can complete the philosophical journey which will free both of them. In 'Dora Markus' the hearer-addressee indicates that the land to which she belongs is beyond the sea. Just as in 'In limine' a wall encloses the

speaking voice within a claustrophobic garden, the sea in 'Dora Markus' can be seen as another metaphor for the insurmountable obstacle which divides Dora from her own country, a land which is placed beyond the spatial co-ordinates where the speaking voice and the hearer-addressee are placed. This can be recognised as a feeling of disharmony with the surrounding spatio-temporal environment which unites the hearer-addressee and the Montalian poetic voice as twin-souls:

Fu dove il ponte di legno	(It was where the wooden pier juts out
mette a Porto Corsini sul mare alto	above the sea at Porto Corsini
e rari uomini, quasi immoti, affondano	and a few men, almost immobile, drop
o salpano le reti. Con un segno	and pull up nets. With a wave
della mano additavi all'altra sponda	of your hand you pointed at the unseen
invisibile la tua patria vera	land across the sea - your own.
Poi seguimmo il canale fino alla darsena	Then we followed the canal...)

('Dora Markus', *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-7)

However, this relationship turns out to be impossible as the hearer-addressee is either absent or has lost his/her memory:

La speranza di pure rivederti	(The hope that somehow I might see you again
m'abbandonava.	Was slipping from me;
e mi chiesi se questo che mi chiude	And I asked myself if what shut me out
ogni senso di te, schermo d'immagini,	From any sense of you - that screen of images -
ha i segni della morte o dal passato	Bore death's stigmata; or if something of the past
è in esso, ma distorto e fatto labile,	Still lingered in it, but distorted and grown tenuous,
un tuo barbaglio...	Some dazzle of you...)

(Mottetto 6, *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-7)

Tu non ricordi la casa dei doganieri	(You don't remember the shorewatchers' house
sul rialzo a strapiombo sulla scogliera	above the rock-reef, sheer, upon the height:
desolata t'attende dalla sera	it waits for you bereavedly since the night
in cui v'entrò lo sciame dei tuoi pensieri	the swarm of your thoughts came there to house
e vi sostò irrequieto	unquietly to stay.)

('La casa dei doganieri', *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-5)

Throughout his work Montale puts emphasis on the same problem in different ways by changing tone and expressions, but fundamentally pivoting around the same question: how to defeat the spatio-temporal-historical limitations of reality. Montale adopts poetry as a means of expression in order to carry out his research into his philosophical view of life and reality: the result of this is that his poetic system can be viewed as a philosophy where *poesis* equals *gnosis* (Brose 1984; Riccobono 1994).[2]

On reading Montale's poems, one is struck by the richness of structures adopted within the text, and by the highly metaphorical expressions which indicate spatio-temporal dimensions and interpersonal relationships between poetic voices and addressees present within the same fictitious context.

Many studies have been carried out on the various identities of the persons into which the poetic addressees, present within the context of the Montalian poems, could be conflated. Montale himself often played around with the identity of the addressees in his poems and their appearance in the different texts: this contributed to the allegorical nature of his poems. Martelli (1977) has come to the conclusion that the women addressees in Montale's poems can be synthesised into one and the same throughout his work.[3]

The poem 'Il tu', (from *Satura*), explains the presence of multiple 'tu' (addressees) as the projection of one 'tu' which Montale himself, by commenting on his critics' definitions, refers to as an 'istituto' (a concept). I shall use this as a starting point for my arguments in this article. If the 'tu' is a conceptual-poetic construct, it

is easy to view it as a linguistic construct and follow its developments from a linguistic-deictic point of view. Moreover, this seems to be indirectly authorised by Montale himself:

I critici ripetono,
da me depistati,
che il mio tu è un istituto.
Senza questa colpa avrebbero saputo
che in me i tanti sono uno anche se appaiono
moltiplicati dagli specchi. Il male
è che l'uccello preso nel paretaio
non sa se lui sia lui o uno dei troppi
suoi duplicati

(The critics repeat,
derailed by me,
that my 'tu' is a construct.
Without this fault they would have known
that in me the many are one even though they appear
multiplied by the mirrors. The bad thing
is that the bird caught in the net
does not know whether it is itself or one of his many
duplicates)

('Il tu', *Satura*)

Exegeses of the poem 'In limine' (see also section 5) include Ramat 1972, Brose 1984, Fabris 1984, Giachery 1985. Ramat pondered on the possible identification of the garden with the text itself. In this article I would like to expand this point to propose a new reading of 'In limine', through the study of the deictic system. I believe that the study of deixis is of fundamental help for the critic to analyse the Montalian poetic text as a dynamic one where the reader and the addressee can, in some instances, be identical and where their roles must be of an active nature in order for the poems to achieve their philosophical purpose: i.e. function as gnostic instruments of salvation.

2. What is deixis?[4]

Each natural language functions as a system of infinite potential texts which are referentially connected to the surrounding social and physical context of its speakers. Language in use is, therefore, closely connected to the world in which the speakers live, and necessarily refers to that world. Reference is a fundamental component in languages as a speaker can only speak about, make comments, describe facts which are related to existence: in other words, languages must not 'violate an existential presupposition' (Lyons 1981: 225). In literary language, where contexts are fictionally created, the same principle applies (Lyons 1981; Riffaterre 1979). More will be said about deixis in literary texts, especially lyric poems, in the next section of this paper.

The term 'deixis' refers to the function that demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense and other grammatical and lexical linguistic elements have in an utterance in its relation to the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the surrounding environment.

Deixis has been recognised by Lyons (1975) as the source of reference. It encodes grammatically and/or lexically the relationship between the speaker (of the utterance), or **zero-point** (Lyons 1977: 638; Green 1992: 122), or *origo* (Bühler 1934), and the spatio-temporal context where the utterance is encoded. It also clarifies the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer(s).

Deixis involves a centre of orientation which is egocentric because the encoder of the utterance functions as the origin of a relationship between him/herself and the surrounding cognitive environment. As a matter of fact the deictic system sets the co-ordinates of communication from the speaker's point of view and it encodes the speaker's subjectivity (Lyons 1982).[5] Deixis can be more clearly understood if it is related to its origins in the canonical situation of utterance, i.e. the face-to-face linguistic interaction.

I begin by defining some of the deictic categories which I shall be referring to in the examination of Montale's poems.[6]

The spatial category of deixis includes spatial adverbs such as 'here' and 'there'; direction expressions 'left', 'right', 'up', 'down', 'north', 'south', 'east' and 'west'; also demonstrative adjectives and pronouns 'this' and 'that'.

Temporal deixis includes temporal adverbs 'now', 'then', 'today', 'yesterday', 'tomorrow'. Tense is another linguistic element which is accounted for by the category of temporal deixis. Tense in tensed languages allows the speaker and, together with him/her, the hearer, to project themselves into the past or future, backwards and forward in time, as if texts were real worlds with precise spatio-temporal dimensions. The so-called **deictic projection** (Lyons 1977) allows the speaker and the hearer of a text to picture themselves at a time t_1, different from the coding time t_0, and (re-)experience the event while it is recounted.

The central tense that expresses the temporal dimension of the act of utterance is the present tense. The temporal co-ordinate of the act of utterance, or **coding** time, is to be seen as separable from the time referred to in the utterance itself, or **content** time (Sell 1987). In the canonical situation of utterance **coding** time coincides with **receiving** time, or what I would rather define as **decoding** time, as this involves a relationship with a hearer and his/her decoding of the message. We have already seen how fundamental the function of the addressee is for the functioning of deixis. However, outwith the face-to-face situation of utterance, coding and receiving times occur separately.

The category of deictic reference comprehends: definite referring expressions, demonstratives (adjectives and pronouns); definite articles; pronominal expressions.

Origo includes first and second personal pronouns; vocatives; honorific titles. I agree with Green (1992) in including second person personal pronouns under the category of the *origo*, as second persons refer to the hearer/addressee who plays an active role in the context of utterance and therefore can be seen as closely related to the *origo*.

Empathetic deixis may be considered as a sub-category of the *origo*. In fact it refers to those parts of the speech which encode mental proximity or distance to the *origo*. When such expressions are present within the context of utterance, the text may involve an emotional participation of the speaking voice and of the reader in the fictitious context. This can be achieved by the use of proximal demonstratives when referring to objects or persons which are not present within the same spatio-temporal co-ordinates where the poetic *persona* and the reader are placed: by using proximal demonstratives the speaking voice establishes a closer emotional relationship with what is being described: this relationship can be defined as empathy.

3. Deixis in the poetic text

Bakhtin (1981) claimed that whilst the novel originated and developed as a heteroglossic and dialogic literary genre, poetry is a monologic and monoglossic linguistic phenomenon and is, therefore, inferior. Some studies have been made recently on the nature of the language in the lyric poem and on the deictic systems which mobilise speaking voices and contexts of utterance within the lyric poem (Wales 1988, 1993; Geyer-Ryan 1988; Herman 1989; Green 1992; Semino 1992, 1995; Widdowson 1993).

This study proposes to emphasise the dynamic nature of the lyric poem by showing that the role of the reader is also dynamic and that, in certain cases, the reader takes part in the fictitious contexts he/she creates while reading/interpreting the poetic text. This will be the starting point for the discussion of the dynamic relationship between reader and text. The aim of this paper is to show that the role of the reader is built into the economy of Montale's poetic texts.

The origin of deixis lies in the face-to-face situation of utterance, i.e. the situation which implies that the speaker, the hearer and the referent are present within the same spatio-temporal context. If the referent is not present within the same context, then the speaker can indicate the referent by having recourse, for example, to demonstratives or definite articles. It is possible, however, for humans to create discourse and operate it outside the boundaries of the canonical situation. This is the case of written discourse where a fictitious context has to be created pivoting around a speaking voice and, when the text is read, recreated by the addressee. In order to do this it is necessary to recreate spatio-temporal and interpersonal dimensions similar to those which regulate the human physical environment.

The behaviour and implications of deictic systems and the nature of the speaking voices who grammatically behave as subjects of the fictional 'enunciations' (Todorov 1981: 324) have been a topic of much attention

for stylisticians in the past few years. Traditionally the speaking voices or *personae* of texts, around which deictic systems revolve, cannot be identified with real-life authors, but are linguistic constructs (Herman 1989) deriving from the relationship that a reader establishes with a text when interpreting it. The same can be said when referring to poetic voices within the lyric poem genre.

Green (1992: 125) defines lyric poetry as a genre that mobilises a 'monologic "I" figure'. In this he seems to agree with the Bakhtinian concept of poetic voice. It is true that in many cases the poetic *persona* of a poem can be monological, but there are enough cases, especially in 20th century poetry, where there are linguistic proofs that the nature of the poetic voice is dialogic. There are cases, however, of poetic texts where neither a deictic centre, or zero-point (Green 1992: 122), nor the objects referred to deictically, are present within the context of situation of a poem. In this case we refer to the category of deixis at *phantasma* (Bühler 1982).

Semino (1992) has claimed that the relationship between the speaking voice in the lyrical poem and the reader can vary from the case where the reader is a complete spectator to the fictitious context of utterance, as if an 'eavesdropper' listening to other people's private conversations, to the case where the reader is drawn into the context to participate emotionally in the implications of the poetic text. The emotional participation of the reader in the fictitious context can be achieved by the use of **empathetic deixis**.

Green claims that in a lyric poem the situation is often dramatised and that an **experiencing** mode and an **observing** mode of description are expressed simultaneously. The experiencing mode of description in language is considered deictic by Lyons (1977; 1982), as the speaking voice can project itself back into a precise past temporal co-ordinate and narrate the event(s) as if it was being experienced again during the act of utterance. On the other hand, the observing mode of description is non-deictic as it presupposes a detached way of narrating events.

> The term [...] 'historical', is intended to suggest the narration of events, ordered in terms of successivity and presented dispassionately with the minimum of subjective involvement; and this mode of description clearly related to the static, non-deictic, objective conception of time. The term 'experiential', on the other hand, is suggestive of the kind of description that might be given by someone who is personally involved in what he is describing; and this mode is no less clearly related to the dynamic, deictic, subjective conception of time. (Lyons 1977: 688)

If the experiencing mode and the observing modes of description are present in the lyric poem at the same time, that means that the concept of time in poetry is partly deictic and partly non-deictic.

Green (1992) considers deixis a central element in the understanding of the lyric poem, because it enables the reader to construct a context so as to interpret the symbolic meaning of the text. Semino agrees and underlines the fact that the contexts readers build may vary 'depending on the interplay between the deictic expressions in the text, the subject-matter and linguistic properties of the text as a whole, the readers' attitudes and background knowledge' (1992: 135). She has also shown how the deictic centre can shift within the same text and, thus, how the point of view of the fictional enunciations can vary (Semino 1995). This has drawn attention to deictic shifts which imply the presence of multiple voices within the same text. She has, thus, proved the dynamic nature of poetic voices in the lyric poem.

Deixis is egocentric in nature as the context created by the speaking voice requires that the decoder assumes the speaking *persona*'s point of view in order for the text to be understood. The poetic voice or voices within the same poetic text are represented by the number of different 'I's or zero-points present. Each zero-point within the poetic structure is egocentric in nature and identifies a slight change of perspective within the narration. In this sense, more than one subjectivity can be found in a text, representing as many *alter egos* of what Short and Leech refer to as the 'implied author' (1981: 259), as there are deictic centres. If poetry is partly deictic and partly non-deictic, then to each narratorial level, identified by one deictic centre, there should correspond two different perspectives of narration, i.e. one in the experiential mode and one in the observing mode. It can be claimed, at this point, that poetry uses, as prose does, a Chinese-box narratorial structure, where the observing mode of narration can be considered more authoritative, or closer to the level

of the implied author, than the experiential one. This consideration shows the complexity of the structure of a poetic text, contrary to the simplistic idea of poetry which would derive from the Bakhtinian theories.

4. Text to reader: three examples in the Montalian poetic system.

The analysis of the following three poems by Montale is meant to show a cline of relationships between reader and poetic text within the Montalian system. These relationships are created by the different use of deixis, by the presence or absence of an explicit addressee within the fictitious context and by the possible overlapping of addressee and reader or speaking voice and reader.

In 'Forse un mattino' ('Perhaps one morning') it can be seen that the deictic system is organised as revolving completely around the first person speaker 'I'.

Forse un mattino andando in un'aria di vetro,	(Perhaps one morning going along in a barren air like glass
arida, rivolgendomi, vedrò compirsi il miracolo:	I shall turn around to see the miracle take place:
il nulla alle mie spalle, il vuoto dietro	nothingness at my back, a void stretching
di me, con un terrore di ubriaco	behind me, with a drunk man's terror.
Poi come s'uno schermo, s'accamperanno di gitto	Then as on a screen, assembling themselves in one rush
alberi case e colli per l'inganno consueto.	will come trees, houses, hills, by the accustomed trick.
Ma sarà troppo tardi; ed io me n'andrò zitto	But it will be too late: and I shall go along quiet
tra gli uomini che non si voltano, col mio segreto.	among the men who do not turn, with my secret.)

The spatial co-ordinates are set by negation, 'nothingness at my back', by use of the possessive adjective 'my' which refers to the poetic voice of the fictitious context. There truly seems to be nothing or nobody else present in the poetic context but the poetic *persona*. It is clear that the deictic structure of the poem is organised in such a way that no hearer is implied within the poetic context. The enunciation is either thought or spoken by a person to himself in an environment defined solely by a first-person personal pronoun and first-person possessive adjectives which function as *origo* deictics. This structure seems to prove that the poetic voice in this context is monological.

In the poem n.7 of Xenia II, from *Satura* (1971), the use of direct speech and the interplay of the roles of first and second person within the utterances makes it clear that the reader is witnessing a conversation between two persons.[7]

'Non sono mai stato certo di essere al mondo'.	('I have never been sure of being in this world'.
'Bella scoperta, m'hai risposto, e io?'	'What a discovery, you've replied, and how about
'Oh il mondo tu l'hai morsicchiato, se anche	me?'.
in dosi omeopatiche. Ma io ...'.	'At least you've taken morsels of the world, though
	in homeopathic doses. But I...'.)

The second-person pronoun 'tu' implies the presence of the explicit addressee, to whom the poetic voice is speaking, within the fictitious context of utterance. The fact that the addressee replies to the poetic voice's statement, turns the addressee into a second poetic voice and the first poetic voice into a second addressee. The reader is therefore placed in the position of somebody who is overhearing a conversation between other people: an 'invisible eavesdropper' (Semino 1992). The context of the poetic text can be considered as a fictitious face-to-face situation of utterance. At the same time it is possible to say that the deictic system of this poem is organised revolving around two poetic voices, therefore its context presents multiple voices.

Finally, 'Meriggiare pallido e assorto' ('To laze the noon'), from *Ossi di seppia*, presents a deictic organisation at *phantasma*.

Meriggiare pallido e assorto	(To laze the noon pale and thoughtful
presso un rovente muro d'orto,	near to some blazing garden-wall,
ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi	to listen in the thorn-hedge and the brake
schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi.	to clattering of blackbird, rustle of snake.

Nelle crepe del suolo o su la veccia	In cracks of the soil, where the vetch is
spiar le file di rosse formiche	to catch the red ants in their single tracks
ch'ora si rompono e ora s'intrecciano	now braking formation, now intersecting
a sommo di minuscole biche.	upon the top of their minute stacks.
Osservare tra i frondi il palpitare	To watch through green branches the throbbing
lontano di scaglie di mare	of sea-scales far in the offing
mentre si levano tremuli scricchi	while the wavering creak goes up
di cicale dai calvi picchi.	of cicadas from the bold mountain tops.
E andando nel sole che abbaglia	And as you go in the dazzling sun
sentire con triste meraviglia	to feel with sad bewilderment
com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio	how all of life and its suffering
in questo seguitare una muraglia	is in this steady following
che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia.	a wall with jagged bottle for its rim.)[8]

No first-person speaker is present within the fictitious context: the deictic structure pivots around a number of infinitives ('Meriggiare', 'ascoltare', 'spiar', 'osservare', 'sentire') and a gerund ('andando') which do not mobilise a spatio-temporal zero-point. The co-ordinate of time in this poem is null. The first word of the poem is 'meriggiare' which means to spend the hot hours of noon resting in the shade.[9] 'Meriggio' is noon, is the moment when the sun is at its highest. The transformation of a moment 'meriggio' into a verb of durative action 'meriggiare' creates a sudden breach within the concept of time. One moment has been transformed into a undefined period of time: in other words, the conventional concept of time has been nullified and the whole of the text floats in a world where only space exists. This sense of lack of time is perfectly rendered in Italian by the indefinite use of the infinitive of verbs and by the gerund in line 13.

The demonstrative 'questo' (l. 16) sets the spatial co-ordinate and leads the reader to two interpretations: the former refers to the fictional context created by the poetic text; the latter can be extended by the reader to the human condition in general, of life as suffering. In the first interpretation of the text the reader can assume a psychological distance from the context of utterance as an imagined situation; the second reading of the text implies a possible recognition by the reader of the context of fictional utterance with life in general. This creates a blur in the distinction between the real and the fictitious contexts, where any reader may become involved within the spatial deixis. The spatial deixis being defined by the demonstrative 'questo' ('this') can also be interpreted as **empathetic** deixis.

In these analyses, we have seen that the relationship between text and reader is variable according to the overall meaning of the text, to the deictic system employed by the poetic language and to the knowledge, background and psychological distance adopted by the reader. There are cases, though, where the role and presence of the reader is essential to the functioning of the poetic text. In these cases it is not only possible for the reader to place himself within the fictive context of enunciation, but it is necessary that he does so. I would refer to this as 'role of the reader built into the text'. To illustrate this point the next section will focus on the analysis of Eugenio Montale's poem 'In limine'.

5. Space dimensions and the relationship between text and reader in 'In limine' by Eugenio Montale.[10]

In this section the poem 'In limine' ('On the threshold'), which Montale chose to place at the opening of his first book, *Ossi di seppia* (1925, 1928), will be analysed. This poem is paradigmatic for the use of deixis and the aim of this section is to show that the analysis of the deixis system within this text is fundamental for the comprehension of the dynamic nature of Montale's poetic language. In particular, focus will be on the dynamics of the relationship between speaking voice, text and reader.

Godi se il vento ch'entra nel pomario	(Be glad if the wind in the green nursery
vi rimena l'ondata della vita:	brings you back the surging of life:
qui dove affonda un morto	here where a dead coil
viluppo di memorie,	of memories sinks,
orto non era, ma reliquiario.	was no garden, but reliquary.

Il frullo che tu senti non è un volo,
ma il commuoversi dell'eterno grembo;
vedi che si trasforma questo lembo
di terra solitario in un crogiuolo.

Un rovello è di qua dall'erto muro.
Se procedi t'imbatti
tu forse nel fantasma che ti salva:
si compongono qui le storie, gli atti
scancellati pel gioco del futuro.

Cerca una maglia rotta nella rete
che ci stringe, tu balza fuori, fuggi!
Va, per te l'ho pregato, - ora la sete
mi sarà lieve, meno acre la ruggine.

The throbbing that you hear is not of flight,
but tremor in the eternal womb;
see how this solitary edge of land
turns into a crucible.

Rage is on the sheer wall's nearer side.
If you go on, you will come
- you perhaps - across the phantom that saves:
here the stories are composed, the acts
that the game of the future makes void.

Look for a broken mesh in the net
that grips us, leap out, and escape!
Go, for you I've asked this - now my thirst
will be mild, less biting the rust...)[11]

It should be observed that the coding time (the time of the enunciation or fictional speech event) and the content time (the time of the enounced or narrated event) of this poem are identical: this is clear because of the use of the imperatives 'Godi', 'vedi', 'cerca', 'fuggi', 'balza' and 'va'. The use of imperatives mobilises a deictic centre, the speaking voice, and a silent addressee who is either already within the context of utterance or is being invited to participate in it. The imperatives are therefore acting as *origo* deictics (Green 1992: 126).

The next lexical item which must be considered is the definite article 'il', defining 'pomario' ('nel pomario' - in the apple tree orchard) which acts as a deictic reference. This not only gives the idea that the speaking voice and the addressee know to which orchard the poet is referring to, but knots a tighter bond between them, implying the existence of a well known and familiar place where they have possibly met or, at least, spent some time together. The orchard is a place which recurs frequently in Montale's poetry, especially in his first book.

In the third line we meet the first spatial deictic 'qui' (here) which completes the scene: the context of utterance is defined by the following co-ordinates: *now* and *here*. Moreover, 'here' has some further implications as both the addressee and the speaking voice are placed in the same fictitious context, that is in the apple tree orchard, at the same time (i.e. coding time).*Here* and *now* may also be interpreted as referring to the receiving time (the time of contact between the text and the addressee or decoder). Thus content, coding and receiving times can be interpreted as identical and, from this, it results that 'In limine' is a poetic text *in fieri*: it takes sense from the direct interpretation of the addressee who is now also identical to the reader. This consideration leads us to add some more spatial implications: 'qui', in the third line, not only refers to the 'pomario' but also to the poetic text. At the same time, due to the rhyme that links the first and the fifth lines, it also refers to the 'reliquiario' (reliquary). A reliquary is a place where relics are kept and therefore it connotes a sacred place, but dead; a place where the past lives and where our memories linger, but which is now brought back to life by the wind ('il vento', l. 1). 'Era' (it was, l. 5) suddenly creates a further dimension in the temporal setting: a past situation which is of lesser importance than the present time because it refers to the status of the 'pomario' (now a fertile and productive plot of land) before the wind came to bring back life to it, i.e. when it was only a reliquary.

The presence of two sets of temporal deictic shifters are then of prime importance in order for us to be able to understand the spatial dimensions of the place where the speaking voice has brought us. The space of the context of utterance can have two different natures: a reliquary or an orchard. It is the presence of the wind that can change it from one to the other. We may interpret the wind as the relationship established by the reader-addressee with the speaking voice as a consequence of his/her reading of the poem. In other words the poetic text comes to life and becomes fruitful only because it is read by somebody; were it to remain unread it would be a reliquary, i.e. dead language. Deixis has so far been used by the poet to draw the addressee-reader into the space of a reliquary-poem-orchard situation, thus bringing the wind of life to dead memories in order for them to turn into alive and fruitful language. The need for an addressee-reader is therefore built into the poetic text.

In the second stanza, from the connotation of a feeling of pleasure ('Godi') where the sense of touch is involved, we are now attracted by a sound: 'il frullo' ('the throbbing'). The poet uses a definite article with the word 'frullo' ('il') as a deictic reference in order for us to hear the sounds he is referring to. This sound is being heard by both the addressee-reader (il frullo che tu senti) and the speaking voice. At the beginning of the poem the speaking voice was progressively making use of different categories of deixis in order to invite the reader to become part of the text and to bring back to it the breath of life. Now that the reader-addressee has become part of the poetic text and has transformed the reliquary back into a fruitful orchard, the poet directs the reader's attention to what is happening within the orchard, connoted as a symbolical space. We find another imperative in line 8, 'vedi' (literally 'see', but there seems to be a more active meaning in the verb, i.e. 'look'), which functions as an *origo* deictic and connotes a new sense of perception: sight. The use of deixis results in the complete participation of the reader in the context of enunciation.

We encounter a new spatial deictic: 'questo' ('this'). 'This' is a demonstrative pronoun which implies shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener, but also coexistence in the same space: the poetic text has become a metaphoric space, similar to the spatial dimension which we know from our experience of reality. The 'reliquary' has been turned into an 'orchard' by the wind of life, now 'this solitary edge of land' ('questo lembo / di terra solitario') is transforming itself into a 'crucible' ('si trasforma [...] in un crogiuolo'). In the previous stanza the poet has chosen to use a past tense (the imperfect 'era') which, together with the spatial deictic 'qui', creates a double concept of time within the text: a time when the poem is dead and, after the arrival of the 'wind', a new temporal situation, where everything becomes alive and productive. In this stanza the poet has used a present tense, 'si trasforma', because the reader-addressee, being part of the text, is now taking part in the transformations of the metaphorical space. The space of the text is, therefore, a real 'crucible', as the concept of time, space and their interrelationship with the speaking voice and the reader-addressee are dynamic.

The concept of space really does change within this poetic text when we start reading the third stanza. A new spatial connotation is present in the text: 'l'erto muro' ('the sheer wall'). The 'rovello' (rage) is on the nearer side of the wall ('di qua dall'erto muro') where the speaking voice and the reader-addressee are placed. The wall is thus dividing two different spaces and, as the wall is high, it is implicit that the space that lies beyond the wall is not easily reached. The adverb 'di qua' (on the nearer side) therefore sets some deictic implications and, at the same time, a metaphorical image of the closed nature and difficulties of the space where man is obliged to exist. But there is some hope of salvation for the reader-addressee if he/she can carry on towards the wall, or, perhaps, carry on reading not only this poem, but the whole book, to which this text permits access.[12]

Use is made of the personal pronoun 'tu' (you) in lines 6 and 12. But, if in line 6 the reader-addressee referred to by 'tu' was listening to 'il frullo' which the speaking voice could also hear, in line 12 'tu' refers only to the addressee. The speaking voice is suggesting to the reader-addressee to proceed. So far, the use of deixis in this text has attracted the reader-addressee from somewhere outside the context into the enounced and made him/her participate in the dynamics of what is going on there. Now the deixis system is projecting the reader into what lies beyond the enounced, i.e. beyond the wall, by also promising a kind of salvation from the 'rovello' that lies in the addressee-reader's present position, i.e. within the apple orchard or the *hortus conclusus*.[13]

We encounter a new spatial deictic 'qui' (here) which is described as the place where 'si compongono ... le storie, gli atti / scancellati pel giuoco del futuro'. The spatial adverb 'qui' is not connoting the same space connoted by 'qui' in line 2. The speaking voice has been able to project the reader-addressee beyond the wall into a new space. The analysis of the system of deictics enables us to see this sudden change of spatial co-ordinates. The reader has been taken into a symbolical space by the speaking voice. Is it a space beyond life or simply the rest of *Ossi di seppia*, or a general space of poetic vision and composition? Perhaps the third stanza holds more definite answers to these questions.

The speaking voice prompts the reader-addressee to look for a 'broken mesh in the net / that grips us' (cerca una maglia rotta nella rete / che ci stringe). It is clear that the place connoted by 'here' is in some way unpleasant, restrictive for both the speaking voice and the reader-addressee. The use of the imperative,

'cerca' (look for), which functions as an *origo* deictic, indicates that only the reader-addressee is able to find the 'broken mesh' and, thus, to escape. In line 16 we read: '[...] tu balza fuori, fuggi' (leap out, and escape). The speaking voice, who attracts the attention of the reader-addressee at the beginning of the poem and draws him to participate in the dynamics of the text-orchard, is now advising the addressee to get out of it, to escape. The *origo* deictic 'tu' of line 16 clearly draws a distinction between the speaking voice and the addressee-reader. Whilst there is a possibility for the addressee to escape, there seems to be no way out for the speaking voice. The *ego* has been looking for a way to go beyond the wall but has obviously failed.[14] The dichotomy between the *ego* and the addressee is further highlighted by the fact that the speaking voice has even prayed that at least the reader-addressee could jump out of the unpleasant place where they both seem to be prisoners: 'Va, per te l'ho pregato, - ora la sete / mi sarà lieve, meno acre la ruggine...'.

The use of deixis in the fourth stanza of this poem seems to be exactly opposite to that of the previous stanzas. In the first three stanzas deixis works towards the attraction of the addressee-reader into the spatial and temporal dimensions of the poem-orchard. In this last stanza, both semantically and deictically, the speaking voice is trying to convince the addressee to depart from the 'pomario'. This seems to be a contradiction. This apparent contradiction is a proof that the spatial deictic marked by 'qui' (here) in line 3 and the spatial deictics marked by 'qui' in line 13 and 'fuori' (outside) in line 16 are referring to two different spatial dimensions. The first 'qui' of line 3 refers to a positive spatial dimension; or which has become positive as soon as the reader-addressee has brought back to it the breath of life which has turned it from the status of a reliquary to a melting pot. The other two spatial deictics refer to a more negative space which is perceived by both the speaking voice and the reader-addressee as a claustrophobic place, limited by a wall, and from which one wants to escape.

We could interpret the first spatial dimension as being the space of the poetic language which can help the reader-addressee to escape from a negative existential condition. The speaking voice has clearly succeeded in helping the reader-addressee to go beyond the 'wall' and this is understood by the new temporal deictic 'ora' (now) ('ora la sete / mi sarà pi lieve, meno acre la ruggine...'). The temporal deictic 'ora' refers to a new condition where the reader-addressee has managed to escape from the 'pomario'. 'Ora... sarà' (Now...will be) includes the present as well as the future condition of the speaking voice. Most importantly, the dots which end the poem are symbolical of continuation, they refer to what comes after, they prompt the reader-addressee to turn the page and carry on reading, thus symbolising the passage for which the speaking voice had been praying. Within the internal economy of the poem they may symbolise the repetition of the whole cycle of attraction of a new reader-addressee into the dynamics of the language and thus a new salvation. Once the reader has brought life to the poem and, thus, also to the speaking voice, he/she can make use of the poetic language to go beyond the spatial-temporal limitations to which humankind is subjected. The role of the poet, and of poetry, in general, is suggested to be that of salvation. It is clear now that 'qui' in line 13 has a second meaning: not only does it refer to the claustrophobic space from where the speaking voice and the addressee are trying to escape, but also to a more symbolical space, i.e. the space of poetic intuition and poetic vision.

6. Conclusion

In this poem the analysis of the use of deixis has proved of fundamental help in understanding what kind of relationship the speaking voice wants to establish with the reader-addressee. Such analysis has also shown further implications involved behind the use of spatial and temporal deictics. This text is indicative of the poetic themes which Montale will develop further in his poems. I believe that the study of the deictic system in 'In limine' is a first and essential step towards the comprehension of Montale's linguistic organisation which is closely connected to his philosophy of life and poetry. These conclusions draw attention to the need for a more detailed understanding and further research into the dynamics of the relationship between text and reader.

NOTES

1. All quotations from Montale's poetry are taken from *Tutte le poesie* (1987), III edizione, Giorgio Zampa (ed.), Milano: Mondadori. All translations, unless otherwise stated in a note, are taken from two works of translation: *Eugenio Montale: Selected Poems* (1964) translated by G. Kay. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and *Eugenio Montale: Selected Poems* (1966) introduced and translated by G. Cambon et al. New York: New Directions.

2. For a further analysis on this point see E. Montale (1972) *Nel nostro tempo*. Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 46ff.

3. The four women addressees are traditionally conflated into Clizia (partly a fictional idealisation of the American scholar Irma Brandeis), a Peruvian woman, and two different versions of Annetta-Arletta. There are two other women who can be classified as addressees number five and six in Montale's poems: Volpe (a fictional projection of the Italian poet Maria Luisa Spaziani) and Mosca (Drusilla Tanzi, Montale's wife, present in 'Ballata scritta in una clinica' and, generally, in *Satura*). Martelli, however finds that the Montalian women have similar fictional features, therefore he is able to synthesise them into one woman figure. For further analysis of this theme see: Martelli (1977); Montale's letter to Guarnieri (1964); notes to the first edition of *Bufera e altro* (1956).

4. I have been much influenced in writing this section on deixis by Lyons (1977), (1982); Green (1992).

5. I use the term 'subjectivity' in the same sense as Lyons (1982).

6. Green (1992) proposes a new classification of the deictic categories: reference, the *origo*, time and space, the text, subjectivity, and syntax. **Text** deixis comprises all the elements which refer the text back to itself, including **impure textual deixis**. **Subjectivity** deixis accounts for the presence of modality in an utterance as modality encodes a subjective experience on the part of the encoder. **Syntax** deixis includes syntactic forms which have a deictic function: for instance an interrogative construction of an utterance presupposes an addressee.
The final three categories will not be discussed in this section.

7. My own translation.

8. I do not totally agree with Kay's translation of line 6, where the verb 'spiare', literally 'to spy', has been translated by 'to catch'. I think that this would break the overall idea of passive observation of the surrounding world and apathy which characterises 'To laze the afternoon'.

9. See Battaglia (ed.), (1961ff) *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* Torino: UTET; Devoto & Oli, (1990) *Il dizionario della lingua italiana*, Firenze: Le Monnier.

10. 'In limine' from *Ossi di seppia* (1925 and 1928). The poem 'In limine' opens Montale's first book and its position within the book is *in limine* (on the threshold) to *Ossi di seppia*. Montale chose to publish the whole text in italics.

11. I suggest that 'pomario' should be translated as 'apple-tree orchard', or simply 'orchard' as the theme of the orchard is recurrent in Montale's work.

12. Brose (1984:170) sees a very close resemblance between this text and its position within *Ossi di seppia* and the text written on the door of Dante's *Inferno*.

13. With *hortus conclusus* I allude to the biblical *topos* of *locus amoenus*. For more on *hortus conclusus* in Montale's poetry see Brose (1984) and Giachery (1985).

14. The issue of why the speaking voice *is not able* or *cannot* proceed beyond the wall has been explored in West (1981), Brose (1984), Riccobono (1994).

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CONSTRUCTIVISM, OPTIMALITY THEORY AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION - THE SHAPES WE MAKE IN EACH OTHER'S HEADS.

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Abstract

This paper identifies a feature of neural nets which may be described as the principle of ease of processing (PEP) and which, it is argued, is the primary force guiding a learner towards a target grammar. It is suggested that the same principle lies at the heart of Optimality Theory, which characterises the course of language acquisition as a progressive reranking of a hierarchy of universal and violable constraints. It is observed that the hierarchy a learner is in possession of at any particular time is the learner's present characterisation of the grammar of the target language and will determine what outputs nets involved in linguistic processing produce for any given inputs to those nets. It is suggested that spatial metaphors may give us a clearer insight into the workings of neural nets, and that we can see the process of self-organisation of nets in accordance with the PEP as a realignment of the positions of linguistic elements in a multidimensional space that is a characterisation of the target language.

1. Introduction

What form does language take inside people's heads? How are concepts, ideas and meanings instantiated? How does the learner unconsciously discover linguistic rules? What is it that leads a speaker to be able to judge the relative grammaticality of an utterance?

All these questions can be answered (though not yet fully) if we imagine the brain as a device that self-organises in accordance with what I shall call the Principle of Ease of Processing (PEP), in the sense of minimising energy expenditure in converting an input to an appropriate output. By input/output, here, I do not mean speech we hear and speech we produce. Instead, I am referring to input to a neural net (from other nets) being converted to output which then serves as input to other nets. It will be suggested in this paper that the PEP is a characteristic feature of neural nets in general (biological as well as artificial), and as such is the primary force that drives and guides the course of language acquisition.

2. Language in the environment, and language in the brain

We can make a clear distinction between two types of language - language that exists outside, and language that exists inside, people's heads (roughly, E-language and I-language, respectively - see, for example, Chomsky 1986:19-24; 1995:15-17). The former exists as speech, signs and writing, the latter as patterns of neural activity. The former always results from the latter, and in as much as the language we read or hear (or see, if in the form of sign language) causes neural activity within us, we may view speech and its correlates as intermediaries between the neural activity of speaker/signer/writer and an audience. Indeed, we can say that language as it exists outside our heads is a representation of the language inside our heads from which it results.

Language inside our heads is representational too; representational of the external language that causes it, representational of ideas and concepts in the speaker/signer/writer that we take the external language to represent, and representational of ideas and concepts within ourselves that are in themselves representations of yet other thoughts, ideas, feelings and other mental events, together with representations of the external world of which speakers and the external language they produce are a part.[1]

Language is a highly complex representational system that is an integral part of a larger, even more complex representational system that enables us to make sense of our experiential world (see, for example, Bickerton, 1990). Given that it is so complex, how is a child capable of learning the language of her linguistic community with such evident success? This question has long been investigated and the conventional answer

is that the child comes equipped with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is taken to be primarily composed of knowledge structures (principles) that are applicable to any and all human languages (by means of setting parameters). These hypothesised knowledge structures are known as Universal Grammar (UG) (see, for example, Chomsky, 1981, 1986, 1988). As Haegeman puts it:

> Given that neither formal teaching nor overt evidence seems to be the source of the native speaker's intuitions, it is proposed that a large part of the native speaker's knowledge of his language, i.e. the internal grammar, is innate.
>
> (1994: 12)

The appeal of the UG hypothesis is strong, particularly if we accept that the learner's ultimate knowledge is underdetermined by positive evidence in the primary linguistic data (PLD) (Wexler, 1991), and that the linguistic data we are exposed to contains a fair degree of noise, in the sense of ungrammatical or otherwise erroneous input (slips of the tongue, false starts, etc.) that the learner should not use as a basis for determining the target grammar.

3. UG as a genetic endowment

The view of UG that seems to be commonly held amongst many of its advocates is that it is innate knowledge that is built in from the start (the 'strong continuity' view - see Hyams, 1983; Pinker, 1984), and that the process of acquisition is largely one of selection and elimination in response to triggers in the PLD. After all, Chomsky identifies UG as 'the initial state', or theory of the initial state (see, for example, Chomsky 1980; 1995:14). This mainstream view of learning is described as regressive by Quartz and Sejnowski (1995), in that it portrays development as essentially a two-stage phenomenon, with the first stage (preparing the 'initial state') being one of constructing a rich neural pool of prerepresentations as a result of genetic and epigenetic processes, followed by a stage in which the prerepresentations are selectively eliminated (in response to the processing of the PLD) until a subset of the original pool is arrived at which is thought to underlie, though not fully characterise, adult competence.

The conventional portrayal of language acquisition, then, is that neural structures that embody knowledge systems that fit the data are selected for use, and that those that do not fit are, if not actively eliminated, allowed to deteriorate. This would seem to account for the apparent unavailability of UG in older L2 learners that is evidenced by their general inability to reach native-speaker-like competence (as shown by both inferior performance and differences from native speakers (NSs) in grammaticality judgement tasks). We might say, for example, that the L2 learner has difficulty in determining the target grammar because the structures that underlie a characterisation of that grammar are no longer fully available. Despite its attractions, such a view is, I believe, mistaken, as I shall attempt to show in the next section.

4. The rejection of extreme nativism in favour of constructivism

Appealing though it is, the strong continuity view of selecting existent knowledge structures that better fit the PLD and eliminating their inferior rivals, is very probably not well-founded as it stands. Recent neurobiological evidence speaks against it, as Quartz and Sejnowski (1994, 1995) amply demonstrate. Unfortunately, space does not allow more than a brief outline, but the conventional view of a proliferation of neural growth followed by extensive axonal and dendritic arborisation (i.e. growth and branching of the extensions of nerve cells) and subsequent massive neuronal death is, they argue, false. So too is the assumption that the cortex contains a variety of structures that are, somehow, an array of knowledge systems which may be selected in response to the environment (including the linguistic environment) the individual finds itself in. This is evidenced by recent findings that the cortex 'is largely equipotential at early stages' (Quartz and Sejnowski, 1995: 28), the assumption being that equipotentiality does not equate with variety.

What is salvageable from the UG account is that basic structures capable of forming primitive representations grow and develop throughout the course of acquisition, rather than a rich (and varied) set of knowledge structures that characterise core elements of any and all human languages being 'hard-wired' and in the learner from the start. The ways in which the primitive structures develop are determined not only by

genetic factors, but by the interaction of these structures with the environment. In attempting to process information derived from the environment, neural nets reorganise (ultimately through progressive arborisation of both axons and dendrites, together with changes in number and position of synaptic connections) to become structures that appropriately deal with the input they get as a result of the environment they are in, in progressively more efficient ways. There will still be a degree of 'pruning' of inappropriate connections, but the emphasis is more to be placed on environmentally determined growth.

Such thinking fits well with a 'maturational view' of UG (such as that espoused by Clahsen*et al.*, 1994), as well as with recent ideas concerning the 'initial state' in SLA (see, for example, Schwartz and Eubank, 1996; Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996; Schwartz and Sprouse, 1996; Eubank, 1996). If we look at language acquisition as largely a process of specialisation through growth, rather than a selection and pruning of what is already built in, the initial L2 state will have less and less in common with the initial L1 state, the later L2 acquisition begins. The L2 learner will be obliged to make use of the growth (and thus knowledge structures) already established by the acquisition of the L1, and interference will be inevitable.

To reiterate, the account with which we may replace the regressive/selectionist/eliminativist/extreme nativist UG hypothesis is one in which the neural structures that embody linguistic knowledge develop and evolve in response to the processing of PLD. The principle that governs the development of such structures - indeed, it may be seen as the very engine of learning itself - is one of maximising efficiency in neural nets responsible for linguistic processing. The idea is that any net will develop a structure, through progressive self-organisation, that will process the types of inputs it receives to produce appropriate outputs with minimal expenditure of energy.

5. Energy Sheet Topologies and neural nets

Representations (and constraints and processing propensities) in nets are taken to be distributed (see, for example, Hinton & Anderson 1989/1981; McClelland and Rumelhart, 1985, 1986; Rumelhart and McClelland, 1986; Churchland, 1986; Schwartz, 1988; Smolensky, 1988; Bechtel and Abrahamsen, 1991; Aleksander and Morton, 1993), in that they are not to be identified with the activation of single neurons. There are no 'grandmother cells' (i.e. single cells the activation of which is associated with a single composite concept such as 'grandmother' - see Anderson and Mozer, 1981; Churchland, 1986). How then are we to imagine the operation of distributed representations and distributed 'soft' constraints? The answer is to think of a net as a device for converting inputs to outputs. Inputs and outputs will be distributed too, but we can think of an input of type x entering an energy landscape at point x (or in region x, depending on how specific we want our notion of a particular input to be) with inputs of other sorts entering at other points.

Imagine a rubber sheet that reflects the degree of energy required to convert inputs to outputs (technically referred to as a 'Lyapunov sheet' in the literature, see e.g. Kosko, 1992: 77). Inputs of different kinds will fall on the sheet in different places. Outputs will be from the lowest points in areas that 'capture' particular inputs. The idea of capturing leads us to speak of dips or wells in the sheet as basins of attraction. Any input falling within the mouth of such a basin will lead to an output of a type associated with the lowermost point of that basin, unless there is interference from conflicting constraints in other sheets involved in the processing. With a simple two or three dimensional topology, inputs and outputs are pretty much clear cut.

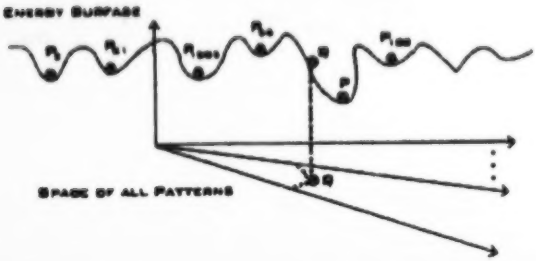

Figure 1a. Here, the input pattern Q will move down the slope of the basin of attraction as the system settles and result in the output P (from Kosko, 1994: 212).

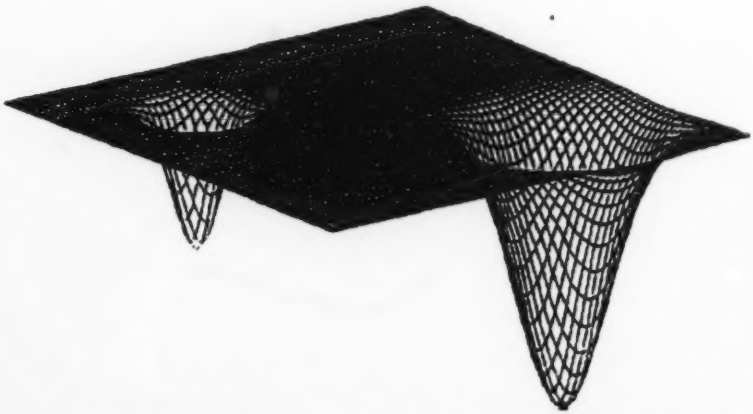

Figure 1b. Basins of attraction in an energy sheet. Imagine an input as being like a ball placed on, or falling onto, the sheet. Any input falling into the area of the basin will result in an output corresponding to the lowermost point of that basin. (From Wasserman, 1993: 18.)

Topologies determine processing propensities and reflect sets of 'soft' constraints. Simply (albeit inaccurately) put, if we imagine a topology in three dimensions, the peaks and slopes represent areas of constraints against processing, where more energy is required to convert input to output, while the valleys and wells represent propensities, areas where the conversion of input requires less energy.

This is taken to reflect the fact that learning in brains is thought to reside in protein synthesis that strengthens appropriate synaptic connections and thus eases the evocation of patterns of activation that are representations of what has been learnt or, alternatively, lead to replications of the behaviour that has been learnt (Rose, 1993). In either case, we can say that the pattern of connectivity creates a topology in which constraints and propensities are inherent, and that this is how knowledge of any kind is instantiated.

How true this view of learning is is difficult to say, but it is the view that is presently favoured by most researchers, and a great deal of evidence appears to support it (see Rose, 1993 for an overview). It is often referred to as the Marr-Albus theory (Marr, 1969; Albus *et al.*, 1989), which states that conversion from short term memory (STM) to long term memory (LTM) takes place as a result of long term potentiation (LTP) or long term depression (LTD), or a combination of the two.

LTP results from connections in a net being strengthened, making the transmission of signals from neuron to neuron easier, while LTD is the reverse. We can associate LTP (known to take place in the hippocampus) with creating valleys or wells in the topology, or deepening existing ones, and LTD (known to take place in the cerebellum) as creating peaks, shelves or plateaux, or raising the height of existing ones. LTP thus illustrates the role of the PEP in driving learning in that the strengthening of connections responsible for appropriate processing makes subsequent processing of a similar type easier. LTD does not, however, violate the PEP. It is simply an alternative method for sculpting energy sheets.

The task of the language learner is to develop energy sheet topologies that characterise knowledge of the target language by making progressive changes in neural architecture. The changes made will be in accordance with the PEP in that the learner will maximise the extent to which linguistic constraints are satisfied in the processing of the PLD.

6. Language Acquisition as a search problem in Hypothesis Space

The course of language acquisition may be characterised as a search problem through a multi-dimensional space (a hypothesis or acquisition space), each point in the space representing a permissible human language grammar (Gibson and Wexler, 1994; Turkel, 1995). One of the attractions of UG and Principles and Parameters Theory is that the hypothesis space to be searched will be limited. One possibility is to characterise the learner as an error-driven hill-climber, searching for a global optimum in accordance with Greediness (see Gibson and Wexler, 1994) - moving only to positions that reflect an improved analysis of the data at hand - and the Single Value Constraint (SVC) of Clark (1992) - moving to a grammar which differs minimally from the one presently entertained, i.e. to one that is a near neighbour in the search space. The problem for such a model is that the learner (even in relatively simple, idealised, spaces) is likely to encounter traps -areas of the hypothesis space which are local optima, and from which, given Greediness and the SVC, she cannot escape in that no near neighbour grammar is better than that characterised by the present position (see, for example, Gibson and Wexler, 1994; Pulleyblank and Turkel, in press).[2]

Various solutions may be suggested for dealing with this problem, one being the use of Genetic Algorithms (Clark, 1992; Pulleyblank and Turkel, in press)[3]. Whatever formulation is chosen, however, the learner needs some criterion by which to evaluate the superiority of a proposed position in respect to the one presently occupied. In fact, it is not a conscious choice on the part of the human learner, but a choice made by nets responsible for linguistic processing in accordance with their nature. The choice is based on the fact that nets self-organise by following the PEP.

Optimal structures are those that maximise harmony, harmony being the extent to which constraints are minimally violated and maximally satisfied when converting input to output. If, as a result of a proposed change, the harmony of the system in processing the PLD is increased, the change will be adopted. This feature of the system is the PEP.

Thus nets involved in linguistic processing will happen upon structures that better fit the PLD in that they are more suited to an analysis of the data than those the nets presently employ. In so doing they will develop linguistic knowledge. The greater the efficiency in converting inputs to outputs, and the greater the appropriacy of the conversion, the more accurate is the set of neural structures as an embodiment of linguistic knowledge.

Such an account is very much in line with the thinking behind Optimality Theory (OT), a relatively new and fast growing research programme within Linguistics, as well as being one which fits well with the neurobiological facts as we know them.

7. The Optimality Theoretic view of language acquisition

OT views linguistic knowledge as being instantiated in hierarchies of a finite set of violable universal constraints (see, for example, Prince and Smolensky, 1993, Tesar, 1995, Legendre *et al.*, 1995). In any hierarchy, some constraints will dominate, or outrank, others, and thus will be respected over lower ranking constraints with which they conflict. We may call such structures Constraint Domination Hierarchies

(CDHs). Differences between languages are thus explained by variation in the CDHs that characterise them. In consequence, OT views language acquisition as a process of progressive reranking of constraints in a hypothesised CDH in determining a CDH that satisfactorily accounts for the PLD of the target language that the learner is exposed to, together with the acquisition of the lexicon (Tesar and Smolensky, 1993).

7.1 The size of OT spaces

Because OT hypothesis spaces are so large and complex, learning techniques based on brute force serial searches or chance may be ruled out - the learner would in all likelihood be exceedingly old by the time an appropriate CDH was happened upon. As Pulleyblank and Turkel point out:

> In constructing a theory of parametric variation, changing the number of binary parameters from *N* to *N+1* doubles the number of possible grammars. Adding a constraint to a system of *N* constraints results in *N+1* times as many grammars. To get an idea of the magnitude of the space, consider a learner which enumerates the possible grammars, and is able to test one grammar per second. On average, the enumerative learner will have to test 1/2 of the grammars before finding the target. For a system of 5 constraints, the learner would take about 1 minute to find the target grammar. The average learning time goes up to about 231 days for a system of 11 constraints. For a system of 20 constraints, this learner would take about 38.5 billion years.
>
> (Pulleyblank and Turkel, in press: section 4)

In view of such considerations, the learner's search of the hypothesis space cannot be random or enumerative. Instead, the learning process must be principled, and the most likely principle is that which governs learning in artificial neural networks; the strengthening of appropriate connections and the weakening or elimination of inappropriate ones, appropriate connections simply being those that more easily produce appropriate outputs from the inputs received.

To an extent, such an answer does, admittedly, beg the question of how new connections are formed in order to be tested to see whether they are appropriate. I suspect that the learner builds, by means of the action of interneurons[4], a number of virtual patterns of connectivity which represent CDHs that are near neighbours of the present position and tests these out (i.e. sees to what extent they are superior in analysing the data by judging which ones process input based on the data with a greater degree of harmony). The learner might then move to any position that is found to be superior to the one presently occupied by physically instantiating either connections that lead to a real pattern of connectivity that embodies the virtual pattern tested, or by strengthening the connections that facilitate the pattern of firing of the interneurons that are responsible for creating the superior virtual pattern of connectivity that is built on the real pattern that exists. We could also imagine a blending of the two scenarios with a progressive development of the real pattern under the influence of the maintained success of the virtual in processing input based on the PLD.

7.2 CDH reranking compared with parameter setting

It is also likely that constraints are not reranked independently but as sets of tied changes; rerankings of sets of related, interdependent, constraints. Constraints, then, may be seen as coming in families. The parallel with the idea of parameters (particular 'settings' of sets of interdependent constraints) and principles (constraints) is striking. The fact that the position of some constraints in a CDH must be dependent on the position of certain others is obvious if we consider the fact that many constraints are conflicting - there are pairs of constraints in which not both may be satisfied - the satisfaction of one rules out the satisfaction of the other. A simple example is the constraint pair Repeat and *Repeat (do not repeat) (see Yip, to appear, for a discussion of various types of repetition and its avoidance in Javanese). One either repeats, say, a word in a speech stream and thus satisfies Repeat-w (repeat word) and violates *Repeat-w, or one doesn't, in which case *Repeat-w is satisfied and Repeat-w is violated. Repeat /*Repeat can never occupy the same stratum in a CDH; at any moment in time one must outrank the other. This is not to say that one must always outrank the other. Sometimes we may wish to repeat a word for the sake of emphasis ("It's a long, long way.""It's very, very complex."), at other times we may not. At least some elements of our CDH must, therefore, be

variable, depending on the context and what it is that we wish to express. How might such a change in CDH structure be achieved? One possibility is that we continually create a virtual pattern of connectivity in our linguistic nets (as suggested above), and that this pattern of connectivity embodies the CDH of the moment. This virtual pattern may be varied in some respects, at any given moment, through the intervention of interneurons acting in a way similar to so-called Sigma-Pi units as outlined in Rumelhart and McClelland (1986: 73/74). Admittedly, things are unlikely to be quite so simple, and it is more probable that changes are effected in a number of different ways by many groups of neurons acting in parallel and in competition with the influences of yet other groups.

A way of imagining how such sets of changes in a CDH may take place is by considering linguistic elements as representations that exist in multi-dimensional space, and the changes being realignments of clusters of elements within that space, as we shall see in the next section.

8. A-theory and realignment of elements in Language/Linguistic Space

Culicover and Nowak (1995) set out arguments for a conception of language acquisition based on 'adaption' that they consequently term 'A-theory'. According to their view, knowledge of language is built up through the establishment of representations and links between representations in what they term Linguistic Space, in response to frequency of forms in the PLD.

The links between lexical categories establish permissible trajectories through Linguistic Space. The more closely aligned and parallel the trajectories between categories (the categories themselves being clusters, ultimately, of representations of lexical items), the more confidence the learner will have in the 'rule' expressed by the 'envelope' of trajectories. Thus the learner will judge a novel sentence as being grammatical if it is composed of lexical items that can be assigned to the clusters of linguistic categories that lie along those permissible trajectories.

For such a system to work, linguistic items with similar properties are taken to be represented in the same region of representational space. Culicover & Nowak call this the Local Optimization Principle:

> A representational space tends to self-organize in such a way that elements with similar properties are relatively close to one another.
>
> (*op.cit.* : 22)

An important point here is that of 'self-organization'. If properties of a particular set, A, of representations in an area of Linguistic Space presently also occupied by representations B are realised to make A more similar to the set of representations X than was realised hitherto, the space will reorganise so as to bring A and X together. This will entail either locating A, B and X together in the same region of space, or moving A to X, or moving X to A and relocating B. The choice made will depend on how optimal (in terms of maximising harmony/ease of processing) the subsequent alignment of trajectories is, and is clearly analogous to parameter setting. If the alignment of trajectories formed by moving A to X proves a better basis for analysis of experienced data than grouping A, B and X together, or moving X to A and relocating B, this will be the preferred move. It will be preferable in that, in accordance with the PEP, it will provide a more efficient configuration in which fewer constraints are violated in processing the data.

9. OT and multi-dimensional energy sheet topologies

We can begin to see how multi-dimensional energy sheet topologies relate to an OT view of linguistic processing if we imagine that the (initially weak) patterns of activation (the candidate set) created by any input will resonate and ultimately settle on a strongly activated pattern that requires least energy to be the output of the net, i.e. a pattern that has the greatest *harmony* with the topology, the one that satisfies the constraints that operate in the relevant part of the topology to the greatest extent or violates them minimally (Smolensky, 1986; Prince and Smolensky, 1993). The optimal candidate for output is therefore the pattern of activation that maximally satisfies or minimally violates the constraints in the energy sheet topology.

It is important to remember that nets map inputs to outputs according to the energy topologies they create. According to OT, a 'grammar is a specification of a function which assigns to each input a unique structural description or *output*' (Tesar, 1995: 1). Smolensky (1995: 1) states that the "*Universal* Components of Grammar" (my italics) are:

> a. Input Set
>
> b. *Con*: Constraint Set
>
> c. *Gen*: Candidate Set for each input
>
> d. *H-eval*: Formal procedure for evaluating Harmony/optimality
>
> (*ibid.*)

Smolensky goes on to state:

> OT is a theory of how one level/component of a structural description is projected from another: optimal satisfaction of ranked and violable constraints.
>
> (*ibid.*)

As we saw in section 5, the idea of energy sheets reflecting the conversion of inputs to outputs is a good way of imagining the effect of distributed soft constraints and other forms of representation within a net. If we imagine a more complex situation in which many energy sheets intermingle in the same multi-dimensional space, Linguistic Space, we come closer to an image that captures the OT view of inputs creating candidate sets of patterns of activation which, by a process of competition, ultimately lead to an output being selected which is deemed optimal in terms of constraint satisfaction and therefore grammatical given the CDH or set of topologies that applied in the selection process.

Optimal output candidates will be ones that exhibit the greatest harmony. Different parts of the system will come up with optimal candidates, based on input to those parts of the system and the topologies in the resolution of Linguistic Space that is reflective of those parts. The optimal candidates will then become the input for other parts of the system. We will attempt to portray this schematically in the next section.

10. What do neural networks do?

Neural nets map vectors[5] in regions of multi-dimensional space (called, alternatively, vector space or state space - see Churchland, 1986, though she predominantly uses the term phase space). Input vectors are mapped to output vectors. In cell assemblies pertaining to linguistic processing, many types of vector mapping are carried on in parallel. The chain is unlikely to be so simple, but the following elements seem likely:

auditory stimulus ⇓

creation of candidate set for output in auditory space ⇓

creation of candidate set in phonetic space (phonetic feature mapping from auditory space) ⇓

creation of candidate sets in morphemic and thus lexical spaces ⇓

creation of candidate sets in semantic, syntactic, logical and conceptual spaces

This will then lead to feedback through the chain to make the whole system settle on a solution (thus making all inputs together make sense - comparing the 'as it appears to be' with what it 'should' be). A more familiar way of expressing this process might be as follows:

sound hits eardrum, signals travel to Wernicke's area ⇓

possible morphemes in the phonological/morphological spaces are primed ⇓

possible lexical items are primed ⇓

suitability of primed lexical items is checked in semantic, syntactic and logical areas ⇓

morphemes are decided upon, given feedback from semantic via lexical areas ⇓

best choice lexical items are identified

Production in the form of speech, would presumably involve elements of the following:

generation of possible output candidates in conceptual, semantic and logical spaces ⇓

generation of candidate sets in syntactic and lexical spaces ⇓

generation of candidate sets in morphological and phonological spaces ⇓

feedback (this probably goes on from the beginning of the process) ⇓

strong priming of (reduced number of) syntactic, lexical and thus phonological candidates in their respective spaces ⇓

priming (activation of candidate set) in Broca's area for production of sound stream ⇓

final feedback loops and settling of system, resulting in selection (strong activation) of optimal outputs ⇓

production (speech)

This is, of necessity, highly simplified, but gives us a basis for discussion and examination, and is a useful starting point for progressive refinement.

The diagram is a schematic attempt to portray a dynamic system in which all the constraints exist and in which they always play a part, but the state of the system at any particular moment in time will influence the degree to which some constraints are respected or violated. This being the case, there will be subtle differences in the CDH which are context dependent. This is not necessarily to be linked only to particular lexical items, it is likely that emotional, semantic and pragmatic factors will also play a part, as we shall outline in the next section.

11. One or many CDHs?

The idea of a speaker entertaining a number of CDHs is at first sight problematic in that it would require alternate, virtual, patterns of connectivity, but it seems likely that that is precisely how we are able to speak more than one language. To what extent we use the same nets for processing two or more languages is still an open question, but it is impossible to seriously contemplate the systems for two languages being entirely separate. At the very least, we will use the same systems of conceptual and logical space. We will use other spaces too, to the extent that this is practical. It is possible to imagine a separate lexical space for an L2, but it is doubtful, even in the case of lexical items, that total separation is possible. It is inevitable that we will strive to find similarities between lexical items in our L1 and those in the L2. Every time a similarity is discovered, there will be a point of intermingling of L1 and L2 space.

Even if we speak two languages quite well, there will be very little mixing of the two in production if we live in a setting where we normally only speak one of the languages, so it seems that if the two languages, determined by their respective CDHs, do somehow exist in the same space we can automatically restrict selection to only one language within a space. How might this be done? One possibility is that interneurons set up virtual patterns of connectivity within a net - in this sense the L1 and L2 would be like virtual machines run on the real machine of the net.

Sometimes our selection mechanism relaxes - if, for example, we are trying to communicate with a native speaker of the L2 who also speaks our L1. In such circumstances it is not uncommon, and nor is it unreasonable, for a degree of mixing to take place. Obviously, this does not mean that we mix

indiscriminately - such a policy would quickly lead to a breakdown in communication. It is not a haphazard affair, but something of an ongoing negotiation with both languages being used in an attempt to maximise communication (and perhaps also express empathy).

We tend to stick to one language in a monolingual setting for the simple reason that it would be unreasonable for us to express ourselves in a language that our interlocutors didn't understand. Even in an L1 setting, however, we rarely speak precisely the same language with everyone we try to communicate with. If I return to the region I grew up in, Yorkshire, and meet local people in a pub, I notice not only that my accent (rhythm, pronunciation, intonation, speed) changes, but that I also use words and expressions that I would not normally use. Does this mean that we entertain a whole panoply of subtly different CDHs? This seems rather doubtful in that it would require that we have an alternate pattern of connectivity for every CDH. What seems more likely is that the CDH is the (perhaps virtual) topology of the moment and the topology is variable in as much as the pattern of connectivity can be influenced by context. In this sense, our CDH is constantly under review and being changed by what we have just heard, how we have reacted to it, what we have decided we want to express and how, etc.

If this is true, we do not entertain countless CDHs, i.e. countless CDHs are not physically instantiated in our heads, but we possess a system which is able to variably evoke countless variations in energy sheet topologies, CDHs, though only one CDH exists at any particular moment.

Rather than viewing the learner as having a single grammar/CDH, it is perhaps preferable to imagine her being in possession of a cluster of potential CDHs, remembering that we are constantly changing our CDHs in subtle ways in response to all input processed. We may view such a cluster as a sort of candidate set from which to choose, noting that much of any CDH chosen will have a great deal in common with the others. In this sense we might imagine the cluster being a set of variable elements of the favoured CDH, any of which can be evoked at any particular moment of time.

12. Conclusion

At first sight, it seems obvious that knowledge must emanate from either the organism (that which is built in, i.e. innate), or the environment. Given the poverty of the stimulus argument, the appeal of the UG hypothesis is strong, and it would be folly to reject it without determining a mechanism for explaining aspects of a NS's knowledge that cannot be accounted for by positive evidence in the PLD. At the same time, we should not presume that such knowledge, if not derivable from the input, is necessarily built in. The third possibility, is that the knowledge arises from the interplay between what is built in and the environment. This might be termed a feature of the dynamic system that the linguistic system is.

Such reasoning is unlikely to appeal to those who would like to keep the world conceptually simple - it is satisfying to draw clear lines between domains, and to limit domains in number - but we should not ignore good evidence, and we ignore the insights derived from machine learning and the neurosciences at our peril. The fact is that the real world is not so simple and sometimes refuses to fit into clear conceptual categories that are easy for us to grasp. The positive corollary is that the real world, in its complexity, is found to be more interesting, and thus even more worthy of investigation.

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[1] To clarify this, let us use a few symbols to represent such representations and what they represent. Let's say that there is a speaker and listener and in an exchange the speaker says 'dog'. Let's call this sound stream an E-rep in that it is an external representation (a sign) of what the speaker wishes to convey to the listener. It is a pattern of sound waves in an external medium, usually air. The listener creates a representation of this sound stream in response to the pattern of movements of his eardrum when the E-rep hits it. This is the word 'dog', as it sounds to the listener. Let's call this I-rep1, with I indicating the outermost level of representation on the part of the listener. I understand that some readers may already balk at the idea of this experience (created by the sound stream and the listener's sense of hearing) being a representation. Such readers feel that the experience is a sound, and not 'just' a representation of a sound. However, it is evident that the experience (of sound) we have as a listener when we hear a sound, is not the same thing as the (physical) sound which causes the experience. Even if we are reluctant to say that the experience is a representation of the external world 'object' that the sound stream is, we at least have to recognise that sound as a physical entity outside our heads and sound as an experience inside our heads are different entities in a causal chain and exist at different coordinates in spacetime.

[0]So far, we have an E-rep (which we may call "dog"E) and an I-rep1, ("dog"I). Next, the listener identifies the phonetic form (which might be the same for different lexical items) 'dog'. This is the next level of representation, and we may call it I-rep2. Again, some people may balk at this, wondering how the phonetic form of a word can be said to represent anything. Let's say then, that it is a bridge between the raw, in itself meaningless, sense experience of a particular sound and the range of linguistic entities that that sound can represent, which we may call $(\text{I-rep3})'*$. The linguistic entities will be composed of further sets of representations which we may identify as bundles of concepts pertaining to sense experience and categorisation. In the case of the lexical item dog (as a noun referring to the canine), these will include such things as 'canine', 'animate', 'faithful', 'potentially dangerous' together with a range of visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile qualities based on the individual's experience of what dogs look, sound, smell and feel like, as well as linguistic features such as 'able to take agent or patient roles'. Such concepts lie at a level of representation that underpins I-rep3 and we may call it I-rep4.

Thus we may think of entities that exist at E-rep and I-rep1,2,3 as elements in a causal chain of association, with any element in the chain being such that it is capable of evoking the next. This is what representations do. We may describe this schematically:

Production		**Comprehension**
Speaker	sound stream	Listener
→		
I-rep4 → I-rep3 → I-rep2 → I-rep1 →	E-rep →	I-rep1 → I-rep2 → I-rep3 → I-rep4

[2] Such traps are evidently avoided in normal L1 acquisition, but may play a part in accounting for fossilisation in L2 acquisition.

[3] Genetic Algorithms are a heuristic search method involving the 'breeding' of a population of candidate networks, with individual networks competing with each other on the basis of 'fitness' (their relative success in converting inputs to appropriate outputs) for the chance to 'survive' and 'breed' and thus create the next generation of candidate networks.

[4] Interneurons, as their name suggests, stand between other neurons and affect the connection between them. What I really have in mind is the sort of activity carried out by what Rumelhart and McClelland call 'conjuncts' or 'gated pairs' (see Rumelhart and McClelland, 1986: 73/74) in which there is a branching connection between two neurons, A and B which joins before reaching a third neuron C, that also receives an input from a further neuron, D. We can simulate the activity of such a branching connection if we multiply the outputs of A and B. We can then calculate the net input to C by adding this product to any other inputs C receives from other units. For example, if C's input from the other unit, D, is always +1 (excitatory), if A's output is 1, and B's 0, C's net input will be 1, and if A's input is 1 and B's is also 1, C's net input will be 2. Without the branching connection, i.e. if A and B were each directly connected to C, the net input to C would have been a simple sum of the inputs from A, B and D, giving 2, (1+0+1), and 3, (1+1+1), instead of 1,((1*0)+1), and 2, ((1*1)+1). A link such as that between A and B is called a gate, and the pair of units linked by the gate are referred to as conjuncts (Rumelhart, Hinton and McClelland, 1986: 73) the units as a whole are called Sigma-Pi units.

[5] Vectors, in this sense, are elements of vector space. Mathematically, a vector is a quantity that has magnitude and direction. For example, I can map certain qualities of someone I know by placing a point at a certain distance along a line that represents that quality. Given three qualities, such as kindness, appearance and intelligence, we can place a single point inside a cube that represents the degree to which the person is kind, good-looking and intelligent, the axes (dimensions) representing each of the qualities in turn. If we take this point and map it to another vector space, say one describing attractiveness (if we assume that this depends on how kind, good-looking and intelligent a person is), we have performed the function of a neural net. In this case, the input vectors are kindness, appearance and intelligence, and the output vector is, say, attractiveness.

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